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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to ascertain the extent to which the classrooms reflect a model of open education. The findings are based on an examination of five classrooms and a supplementary analysis of responses to a questionnaire administered to practitioners in 30 school districts. Each classroom is described in terms of the Rathbone model of open education. Nine separate categories for each classroom are compared to the model. Major results for the five classrooms indicate that (1) although all classrooms provide at least some form of individualized instruction, they offer widely different interpretations of a student as his own agent in the learning process; (2) subject areas are not generally integrated; (3) teachers are enthusiastic about multi-age grouping; (4) competition is more pronounced in those classrooms that emphasize group instruction; (5) most children treat failure as a natural occurrence rather than as a threat; and (6) the teacher's role varies considerably in the five classrooms. A review of the literature, a bibliography, and samples of the instruments used in the study are included in the report. (Author)

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A SURVEY OF SELECTED, PUBLIC, ELEMENTARY OPEN CLASSROOMS IN NEW YORK STATE

August 1972

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Informal Education," the "Integrated Day," the "Open Classroom," and the "Leicestershire Plan" all refer to an educational concept originating in England, but rapidly growing in the United States.

The primary schools in England have received a great deal of favorable publicity since the mid-nineteen sixties. Tony Kallet,[1] Joseph Featherstone,[2] Charles Silberman,[3] Beatrice and Ronald Gross,[4] and Lillian Weber[5] have published highly enthusiastic books and articles commanding wide attention in the United States. In addition, a number of magazines and newspapers have carried accounts of the new English approach.[6,7,8,9,10,11]

Interest in open education rapidly expanded. In 1968 only thirty articles were published in the United States that even mentioned what was happening in the English primary schools. Two years later, over three hundred articles had been published.[12]

Open education has been the focus of widespread interest among administrators, teachers, parents, and school reformers, who see it as a way to improve the learning possibilities in the elementary school.[13] American educators describe the assumptions and possibilities of open education. One teacher-scholar states that an essential principle of learning is that "given a rich environment—with open-ended 'raw' materials—children can be encouraged and trusted to take a large part in the design of their own learning, and that with this encouragement and trust they can learn well."[14]

Leo M. Howard asserts,

> Children are generally naturally curious, and true and effective learning takes place when we capitalize on this quality, and stimulate productive interaction between children and materials, children and teachers, and children and children. Children tend to learn best those things they feel that they themselves, in some measure, have chosen to learn. As a result, the developmental classroom attempts to establish a pattern of education that provides opportunities for children to become increasingly involved in and responsible for their own learning.[15]

Vincent Rogers adds that open classrooms are "designed and organized for children. Those teaching in them seem committed to the idea that children are the most important component, the vital raw material, of a primary school and that they are to be heard, cared for, consulted, and respected."[16]

Statement of the Problem

Despite the conviction, sometimes passionate, that open education offers so much more to the individual learner, the movement in the United States remains confused and nebulous. Systematic studies describing the English primary system are available, but a commonly accepted definition of open education in the United States is non-existent. Theoretical studies of open education have been published in the United States,[17,18] but no study has attempted to describe systematically the practices and operating procedures of existing American open classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

This study is a description of selected, public, elementary classrooms in New York State that are reportedly utilizing the open classroom approach. The description is based on direct observation of five classrooms plus the use of questionnaires and interviews. An attempt is made to ascertain the extent to which the selected classrooms seem to reflect a model of open education as described in the "Methods" section of Chapter III.

Limitations of the Study

Difficulties inherent in any descriptive study and especially in a largely unexamined area such as open education are the validity and reliability of the instruments being used.

A descriptive account of the five classrooms inevitably involves observer bias. Although all five classrooms were seen by the same observer, the difficulty remains that each classroom is observed for only a limited amount of time. Also, bias is inevitably present in the comments and responses of teachers, principals, parents, and children.

On occasion there is an unevenness in the quality and specificity of data. Apart from the skill of the data gatherer, some teachers, principals, parents, and children simply seemed to have "more to offer" than others. Fatigue, preoccupation, knowledgeability, eloquence, shyness, and gregariousness are possible explanations for these variations.

The sample is necessarily limited and may not be representative of open classroom practices in New York State. Also, open classrooms as represented in private schools are not included in the study.

Importance of the Study

Theoretical analyses, or brief, casual accounts of existing open classrooms are not sufficient. Findings must be presented which attempt to show the emergence of boundaries or trends that exist in American open classrooms. Marilyn Hapgood asserts, "We cannot reach anything like the English achievement without fully understanding the principles on which it is based, without going through the necessary process of preparation, and without developing the supportive methods to foster it."[19] Joseph Featherstone states that one needs "very specific accounts of informal classes, materials, mechanics, what teachers do, and other details."[20]

To establish the workability of an innovation, one needs accounts that illustrate its viability and potential. One must see the possibilities of open classrooms. Ewald B. Nyquist, the Commissioner of Education in New York State, suggests that the system "cannot be changed without working models of a better way, both as examples and as a competitive spur."[21]

Descriptive models can also serve as warnings. An account of the problems encountered are as important as a description of the successes. Barth and Rathbone write,

> At this time, too little has been written describing successful or unsuccessful attempts to move existing classrooms and schools toward open education. If open education is to have a purposeful and beneficial effect on our educational system, anecdotal accounts of American attempts are desperately needed, both as models and as warnings.[22]

In the United States the majority of articles for improving education do not come from teachers, but from educational reformers and research centers. Weber states, "The teacher is not often encouraged to work out new variations, new ideas. Without connection to a coherent nexus of constantly reexamined idea and examples of application that extend idea, the teacher has adapted to the systematization of the American school, and the teacher as an individual feels helpless to produce change."[23] By providing Weber's "examples of application," this study portrays actual teachers who are experimenting with the open education "idea."

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although open education in England evolved from many sources, a 1932 book by Susan Isaacs and the "Hadow Report" were two of the most influential works which gave impetus to the open education movement.[24] Isaacs wrote a number of important books detailing a child's psychological development and his needs in the classroom. In The Children We Teach[25] the author supports the idea that children learn by doing and exploring, not by remaining quiet and passive. She states that a classroom must be based on the creative value of the child's own movement, and that his relationship to the teacher must remain entirely personal and direct. In summary, she states, "It is a child's doing, his active social experience and his own thinking and talking that educate him."[26]

About the same time as Isaacs' work, W. H. Hadow headed a series of governmental studies that reinforce Isaacs' statements regarding a child's needs and development in the classroom. Hadow states in his report on the primary school,

> We are of the opinion that the curriculum of the primary school is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience, rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored.[27]

Other works that herald later, widespread interest in open education include a description of an experimental school in New Zealand that emphasizes a child's learning from experience. In a subject-integrated community setting, the school urges each child to describe precisely what he feels and observes. Through genuine self-expression the child can perceive his environment on a more subtle and sensitive basis.[28]

Bassett, in an Australian governmental study in 1964, states,

> Maximum individual learning occurs when pupils are taught by methods which evoke active responses from them, and under conditions which permit and encourage the maximum degree of responsibility on the part of the pupils for their own improvement.[29]

A widely-cited study by Hegeler explores the nature of children's play.[30] According to Hegeler, play is important, because children can use play to act out their fears, and learn how to manipulate and construct their own environment. He feels that play also helps children to know and understand each other. Hegeler lists a number of toys, and suggests how they can be used in a school setting.

An early article on the subject of open education, published in the United States, is a comparative description of two 1962-1963 classrooms, one in a Leicestershire primary school in England and the other in a private school in Massachusetts.[31] The author briefly reviews the operation of an innovative British primary school, emphasizing the element of student choice in selecting activities the child wants to pursue. He also describes an integrated curriculum in which children learn from each other and from their environment instead of relying solely upon teacher direction.

A number of articles follow Kallet's which similarly deal with England's informal classrooms.[32,33,34,35] Each author reacts positively to these schools, and briefly details the structure and operations of the classrooms observed.

Widespread interest in the United States dates back to 1963, when

Lillian Weber joined several other British and United States educators at Vassar College for a three week summer conference of the British Nursery Association.[36] The Americans became aware that sweeping changes had been taking place in the British primary schools. A visit to England in 1965-1966 convinced Weber that the quality of the schools was beyond what she had anticipated. As Silberman asserts, Weber has become one of the foremost American advocates of the informal approach to education.[37] Her book describes in detail the English informal system, treating first the practices of open education, and then its rationale and background.[38]

In 1966 D. E. M. Gardner published a book which is still the main experimental source for comparing children under the new British primary system with those in traditional English schools.[39] She found that, except for arithmetic, the new schools were either equal to the more tradition-bound English schools, or superior to them.

Two other English works remain as important examinations of the informal approach. Cass and Gardner systematically describe the actions and characteristics of teachers in informal classrooms.[40] Clegg presents a series of impressive writings, composed by students in informal English classrooms.[41]

American interest in the English informal approach crystallized after Joseph Featherstone's publication of three articles in The New Republic.[42] His studies review the classroom operations of the British primary schools, briefly describing the theoretical foundations, and relating the latter to the findings of the French psychologist, Jean Piaget. Featherstone also suggests how some American schools could adopt the approach. He felt that some of the community schools then appearing might stimulate general educational change toward the British emphasis on individual learning.

Featherstone has published a number of other examinations of the British informal schools since his first articles in The New Republic. In 1968 he presents the reading and writing programs of several British informal classrooms.[43] A book published in 1971[44] summarizes and extends much of what he observed and wrote after his previous visits to England. In this book he also describes what elements are necessary for such a movement to become a reality in the United States. Featherstone cites some of the efforts and descriptions of open education experiments in the United States that by then included elements of an open education approach. Among others, he mentions Frances Hawkins' and Herbert Kohl's efforts,[45,46] and the emergence of the "store-front schools."

In two other articles,[47,48] the author again examines possible obstacles to the success of the British approach in the United States. The second article cautions Americans against a full-scale, crash adoption of the British system. He states two essential conditions for the successful implementation of American open education which will also avoid the dangers of faddishness:

> Whether enough people can understand the essentially different outlook on children's intellectual development which good informal work must be based on, and whether our schools can be reorganized to give teachers sustained on-the-job support.[49]

Great Britain published in 1967 a study entitled Children and Their Primary Schools, better known as the "Plowden Report," which sanctions the informal approach to primary education on a nation-wide basis.[50] The report points out the necessity of a child's learning to adapt to an ever-changing environment, and emphasizes individual discovery and adjustment.

Since Children and Their Primary Schools, a number of books have been written, describing and analyzing the new methods. John Blackie explores the system in a book meant for parents and others interested in a wide-ranging over-all description.[51] Mary Brown and Norman Precious follow with a detailed examination of how the new primary schools actually operate.[52] The authors also provide a first-hand account of the day to day progress of a number of children. Leonard Marsh offers a similarly detailed view of the operations of the primary schools and suggests how and why children learn from this informal approach.[53]

American educators have also been writing on the subject of the British primary school innovations. David Hawkins in an article in 1965 first presents his thoughts on classroom freedom and mobility when he discusses the importance of "messing about" as an initial phase of getting children absorbed in activities and materials.[54] Later, Hawkins elaborates on the importance of joy, and the appreciation of subject matter which are possible in an open setting.[55] Hawkins posits both as crucial antecedents to learning the principles and formulations of any subject. Finally, in a significant paper,[56] Hawkins emphasizes the importance of children's explorations of the non-human environment as well as the world of human relationships. He disagrees with the Freudians who maintain that the "only important formative things in life are other human beings."[57] He feels the latter are important but states, "Some children are only able to develop humanly by first coming to grips in an exploratory and involved way with the inanimate world."[58] Thus Hawkins arrives at a theoretical base for the open school setting where children have the opportunity to explore in depth their environment and their relationships to inanimate and animate objects.

The movement gained significant momentum with the publication of Silberman's Crisis in the Classroom.[59] In a chapter entitled "The Case of the New English Primary Schools" Silberman presents a history of the British informal concept and describes a number of British primary schools. He says about the British schools, "To create and operate schools that cultivate and nurture all these qualities without reducing children's academic attainment—this is a magnificant achievement."[60]

Parallel to Silberman's report, and also widely cited, is an article published by Beatrice and Ronald Gross describing once again the operating principles of the informal or open classroom approach. The authors state, "Learning is rooted in firsthand experience so that teaching becomes the encouragement and enhancement of each child's thrust toward mastery and understanding. Respect for and trust in the child are perhaps the most basic principles underlying the open classroom."[61]

An early collection of writings about various aspects of the British primary schools was published in the United States by Vincent R. Rogers.[62] The latter includes a comprehensive and detailed analysis of all aspects of the British primary schools. Rogers concludes the book by summarizing from an American's point of view why the British schools are so successful. In his conclusion he describes some of the elements that might cause difficulties when adaptations are attempted in the United States. Implicit in his discussion is the need for careful and sensitive application of the new principles to varying school and community situations across the United States.

Two other important collections of writings that also detail the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of open education are The ESS Reader[63] and Open Education: The Informal Classroom.[64] Both books include a number of essays that describe the implicit rationale of open education.

Hertzberg and Stone,[65] and Casey and Liza Murrow[66] follow with separate books that describe their visits to the British informal schools and their reactions to them. Generally enthusiastic in tone, both books suggest how some of the best British informal schools can also become a reality in the United States. Hertzberg and Stone's book is one of the first practical guides published for American teachers who want to set up classrooms similar to the British classrooms described by the authors.

The open classroom schools in the United States can be divided roughly into two categories: classrooms that spring from the British informal approach, and those that are more free-wheeling, unsystematic, and casual than the British prototype. The latter are generally grouped under the heading "free schools." The categories are often blurred, and educational groups which call their efforts "free schools" sometimes advocate various British approaches such as the "Leicestershire method" or the "Integrated Day" approach.[67] Usually the curriculum of the "free schools" is less formally planned, and there is an almost militant emphasis on freedom, spontaneity, and individual choice. Also, "free schools" are small, independent, non-public schools, often founded as alternatives not only to traditional methods but also to public schooling in its entirety.[68]

Relatively few reports have been written concerning actual open classroom schools in the United States. Lillian Weber's efforts in certain New York City schools have been described in a number of sources.[69,70,71,72,73,74] As mentioned, Weber is one of the few American authorities on the British Primary approach who is actively promoting and operating similar schools in the United States.

Two other American authors apply the concepts of open education to actual classroom situations in which they are involved. Frances Hawkins eloquently describes her efforts with a class of young deaf children.[75] Her structured but open environment and her warm close relationship with the children is considered one of the most sensitive accounts of American open classroom teachers in action.[76]

Howard presents his version of the open classroom which he calls "The Developmental Classroom."[77] In addition to the structure, Howard includes the over-all psychological characteristics of his "Developmental Classroom."

The only state sponsoring organized open education on a state-wide basis is North Dakota.[78] Silberman cites North Dakota as evidence that the open classroom approach can work in the United States.

The New School, a teacher education program at the University of North Dakota, operates on the premise that teachers must understand the idea of open education before it can be implemented on a mass scale. Hence, regular teachers from around the state as well as student teachers attend the New School as a way of gaining an insight into the philosophy and operations of the open classroom approach.

State departments of education in New York, Vermont, and New Jersey may also adopt the new system.[79,80] Ewald B. Nyquist, Commissioner of Education in New York, has officially endorsed the use of the British primary school concepts and methods for elementary schools in New York State.[81] As a result, an Open Education Task Force has been established by the state education department of New York to study and promote open education programs throughout the state.

The Education Development Center (EDC) has set up more than eighty classrooms in the United States under the Follow Through program, drawing much of its inspiration from the revolution in English Primary education.[82] The EDC has acted in an advisory capacity for those schools interested in the open classroom approach. EDC, in advocating the Follow Through program, states that they are concerned more than anything else with counteracting the "dehumanization of the educational process."[83]

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) has recently published a study that (1) provides a conceptual framework for the EDC approach, and (2) deals with the implications for assessment of the open classroom approach.[84] ETS acknowledges that existing standardized tests are inadequate for making evaluations of "educational environments, and of young people living in those environments."[85] The ETS is trying to establish new ways of evaluating the goals and methods of open education.

Walberg and Thomas extend the ETS study by providing a comprehensive examination of the salient qualities of open education.[86] Using content analysis, the study attempts to draw up a list of fairly specific open education characteristics, generalizing from the literature in the field.

While the list remains basically theoretical, and its point of view revolves around the ETS analysis of the importance, influence, and attributes of the teacher in the open classroom, the study nonetheless provides a valuable point of view in examining the actual practices of existing open classrooms.

Among the "free schools" whose programs are mentioned in recent publications are the "store-front schools," which are informal schools operating in the immediate neighborhood of the students involved. The staff, in trying to reach the students, attempts total involvement in the lives of those attending. Such schools are organized primarily to serve children of the ghetto who have dropped out of school.[87]

Along similar lines, George Dennison relates his experiences teaching in a New York ghetto school.[88] In spite of the severe deprivation and family problems faced by most ghetto children, Dennison reveals the surprising response of these children to a free and open school which respects their dignity, and believes in their potential. Also, Herbert Kohl deals with the importance of finding a sense of community, and respecting the rights and interests of individual children.[89] In addition, Kohl discusses some of the methods and problems one is likely to encounter in setting up such an environment.

Two other books that deal with the organization and operation of "free schools" include This Book is About Schools, a wide-ranging collection of articles about the philosophy and assumptions behind such schools.[90] Included are descriptions of some of the schools that base themselves on the principles of individual care and respect. Finally, in a book that describes a school organized for disturbed children,[91] the author describes a philosophy that requires children to face their own needs and problems. Von Hilsheimer demands that children take on the responsibility of freedom.

A project related to "free schools," but not actually a "free school," is the Parkway Program in Philadelphia.[92] While still part of the public school system, the Parkway Program is a "school without walls," a concept that uses the resources of the community or city as the curriculum, rather than operating a formal school where children study traditional subjects. As Bremer states, "School is not a place, but an activity, a process."[93]

Summary

This chapter traces the development of open education from its principal origins in England to publications on open education in the United States. Historical works in other countries dealing with open education are included.[94,95,96] The review of literature emphasizes American descriptions, trends, and analyses of open education. Key English works on open education are also reviewed.

Several American authors offer brief glimpses of British informal classrooms.[97,98,99,100,101,102,103] More lengthy American works dealing with British informal education include Silberman,[104] Rogers,[105] Hertzberg and Stone,[106] Murrow,[107] and Weber.[108] American philosophical and conceptual analyses of open education include The ESS Reader,[109] a collection of articles edited by Charles Rathbone,[110] and a study headed by Walberg and Thomas.[111]

Studies reviewing American open classroom attempts include Howard,[112] Frances Hawkins,[113] and Thackery.[114] American works concentrating on the developmental possibilities of American open education include Education Development Center[115] and Educational Testing Service.[116]

The "free school" movement in the United States is related to the American open education movement. American works dealing with the "free school" movement are Dennison,[117] Kohl,[118] This Book is About Schools, edited by Satu Repo,[119] and Von Hilsheimer.[120]

Principal British works dealing with open education include Gardner,[121] Children and Their Primary Schools headed by Lady Plowden,[122] Blackie,[123] Brown and Precious,[124] Clegg,[125] and Marsh.[126]

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Model

In order to give the study a clear focus, a set of criteria, or a model is needed which will identify the fundamental assumptions and beliefs underlying open education. An American study by Charles H. Rathbone has attempted to identify the essential characteristics of open education.[127] Rathbone avoids linking his definition exclusively to British informal school practices. The following is a presentation of the salient points of the Rathbone model:

1. The central tenet of open education learning theory is that a child is an active, crucial agent in his own learning process—learning is the result of this self-initiated, individual interaction with the world he inhabits. The individual child is capable of interacting with almost any element in his environment and learning something from it; such elements include toys, manipulative materials, teachers, and peers. The reactions of people to a child and his activities help him gain a realistic perspective and understanding not only in his subsequent interactions with other people, but in his comprehension of the properties and uses of things in his environment.

A child wants to learn because as Rathbone states, "The most powerful learning mechanisms available to us are built-in, biologically rooted mechanisms of search and exploration: the only satisfaction, the only reinforcement that counts importantly in learning is that which accrues from discovery, from finding structure and order in our individual and unique experience."[128] David Hawkins' term "messing about" characterizes the way a child learns in this way. According to Hawkins, man is a "meaning-making organism." A child "messing about" in an open classroom is making meaning wherever meaning can be made. Mastery of the environment is a need which can be accomplished by bringing order out of the often tumultuous confusion found in one's surroundings.

(a) Considerable independence is granted to the child, because open education holds that learning of knowledge is "ideosyncratically [sic] formed and fundamentally individualistic."[129] Knowledge is not something universal, existing independently of the individual knower, but can take on meaning only if such knowledge is assimilated into a child's own matrix of needs and understanding. There is no set body of knowledge that has equal meaning for all children—each must absorb and accommodate to his environment at his own rate and in his own way.

(b) The importance of a one-to-one relationship between a student and the instructional material selected by him is seen as providing a type of security, for materials will not criticize or threaten a child's feelings of self-confidence or his self image. Materials may communicate the idea that "something went wrong," while people may communicate the idea, "You are wrong."

2. The idea of the curriculum being ordered and subject to neat subdivisions into "disciplines" is rejected by proponents of open education. The theorists believe that the organizing force of a curriculum

> should not be the structure of codified knowledge nor any finite set of skills deemed important by the society sponsoring

> the school, but rather the child's own question-asking and problem-setting activities. Open education insists on the child's right to pursue whatever question interests him, and his right to articulate freely his perception of any issue.[130]

Open education rejects the "class lesson as something prepared in advance and pitched at some imaginary mean. The class lesson reflects an adult-dominated environment which assumes that children have neither the competence for nor the right to make meaningful decisions concerning their own learning."[131] The class lesson makes its assumptions and determinations in terms of the class as a whole and seldom on the basis of a child's individual needs. The class lesson, in effect, restricts the possible kinds of response that an individual can make.

3. The rejection of disciplinary or other boundaries has important implications for the psychological climate of the classroom:

(a) There is a deemphasis of competition among peers—a child finds difficulty competing when each is engaged in a different task.

(b) Multi-aged or vertical grouping leads to a corresponding variety of ability and talent which in turn offers a greater possibility for seeing oneself in a variety of perspectives. A child's competence and self-confidence can grow when he is able to observe freely, and reflect upon others' strengths and weaknesses. Flexible peer-interaction provides role models in the persons of older children: a younger child can often learn more quickly what is expected of him if he has a suitable peer-model.

(c) Fear of failure need not be great in an environment where one learns it is possible to benefit from mistakes and not have to hide from one's errors in order to avoid ridicule. A child does not fail if he is able to adjust to his errors, rather than having the latter totalled up against him, either by the teacher or by his peers.

In summary, the condition most essential in this psychological climate is that of

> autonomy, not only the fact of it, but the child's appreciation of and belief in that fact. Being expected to behave as an independent agent; living in an environment which assumes that every child has the innate capacity and urge to make sense of the world and to make meaningful decisions concerning his own activities in that world: these expectations do have their effects on a child—they teach him to accept himself as a maker of meaning and as someone whose choices count. They teach, however indirectly, a self-respect and self-esteem—in short, a view of himself as agent.[132]

4. Although a child learns much as an autonomous agent in such a climate, it is the teacher who can best determine whether the environment will suppress or encourage the child's developing sense of his relationship to the environment.

In open education a teacher does not pass down certain facts, skills, or concepts to a student, but rather presents a lateral interchange between two persons of nearly equal status, one of whom may need something possessed by the other. To teach means "to facilitate learning by surrounding the child, and helping him into situations where learning can take place."[133] A teacher does not present answers or, indeed, always well-articulated questions. He is to offer, instead, opportunities around which a child can formulate his own questions and from which he can derive his own satisfactory answers.

In summary, the teacher in open education is seen as

> a trained observer, diagnostician of individual needs, presenter of environments, consultant, flexible resource, psychologically supportive relator, general facilitator of the learning requirements of an independent agent, and collaborator.[134]

Three additional points not essential to the fundamental tenets of open education, but nonetheless elements in the descriptions of many successful open classrooms[135,136] are the following:

5. Many British headmasters assume dual roles as administrator and teacher. Many are actually referred to as "head teachers." While the parallel is not necessarily applicable to American open education, a principal who is vitally concerned with teaching can often stimulate the children and inspire the staff to a greater extent than one who remains exclusively in the role of an administrator. As Silberman states, there is no better way of commending one's leadership to the staff than by demonstrating skill in the classroom.[137]

6. The support of the community and specifically the parents is an important element in the success of an open classroom. As Hapgood asserts, "Moral support for good education from the community is perhaps more important than money. Only when there are strong support and understanding in the community can a start be made toward change."[138]

Parents can be involved with an open classroom in a number of ways, including the offering of skills and experience in the classroom, helping the teachers with housekeeping, and making needed materials, and serving in the library or in other areas.

7. As indicated, part of the success of open education depends upon the sorts of preparation and support the undertaking has engendered before the program is launched. Also a factor, as Hapgood states, is the training or re-training of teachers and others to be involved. Basic college teacher-training is not enough. Additional in-service training must be part of every program. Teacher re-training "must be continuous, it cannot depend on one period of day or weeks but must extend over the

first year and be offered at intervals in ensuing years."[139]

Sample

Six school districts are listed by the New York State Department of Education Committee on Open Education as operating at least one open classroom in each of their respective districts. A seventh area, New York City, was listed, but it was excluded from this study for the following reasons: (1) Its uniqueness as the largest, urban metropolis, with its particular problems and demands distinguishes it from other areas in New York State. (2) Lillian Weber's efforts concerning open classrooms in New York City have been widely cited and documented in other studies and reports (See page 12). Appendix A lists the names of the school districts, addresses, contact persons, and telephone numbers that were identified by the State Education Department.

Five of the six school systems were visited during March, 1972. The sixth declined to participate because of the amount of time involved.

Each contact person received a written description of the nature and purpose of the study (See Appendix I). Those who agreed to participate were asked by telephone to provide a list of the names of the schools and personnel who were conducting open classrooms in the district. One classroom from each of the six districts was selected; this was done in accordance with the recommendation of the contact person concerning the availability and willingness of teachers and principals to participate in the study.

Since the publication of the Committee's basic list, other schools have emerged in New York State also claiming to have open classrooms. Therefore, a supplemental analysis based on questionnaires sent out to a random sampling of this new population was conducted. Because of the inherent limitations of a questionnaire, the additional sampling merely attempts to supplement the study's basic findings, either by providing similar data to that already found, or by indicating possible new directions toward which some of the schools seem to be leaning.

To obtain a sample for the supplemental data, a letter was sent to the curriculum and teaching department chairmen of the private colleges, and to institutions of the State University of New York which have an elementary education teacher training program (See Appendix I). The letter stated the general idea and purpose of the study and requested the following: (1) a list of the school districts in the area surrounding the college that had at least one classroom the school district labelled an open classroom. (2) A listing, if possible, of the contact person in each school district, his address, and telephone number. Thirty-three of forty-seven letters were answered.

Using a table of random numbers, thirty school districts were selected from a list of fifty-seven districts (See Appendix B). An explanatory letter, together with the questionnaire, was sent to each of the thirty contact persons requesting that he give the questionnaire to a teacher conducting an open classroom who was able and willing to complete it (See Appendix H). A postage-paid, self-addressed envelope was included for the teacher.

Follow-up letters were sent to the districts which had not responded within three weeks. Twenty-three responses were received.

Instrumentation

Five sets of instruments were used in the collection of data from the five classrooms. The interview schedule for teachers (Appendix C), the interview schedule for principals (Appendix D), and the observation schedule (Appendix E) were designed to obtain a description of each of the five classrooms visited. Questions were chosen that related to the seven points of the model.

The interview schedule for children (Appendix F) was adapted from a questionnaire used by D. E. M. Gardner, as described in her book, Experiment and Tradition in Primary Schools.[140] Her study was used in England to discover the attitudes and reactions of children to their primary schools. The adapted questions are concerned primarily with the child's reactions to the open classroom.

The questionnaire for parents (Appendix G) asks questions related to parental involvement with the school, parents' observations of their children's reactions and progress in the open classroom, and the reactions of parents to the open classroom. Parents also are asked to describe the schools' methods for communicating their child's progress and other information.

To offset partially the problems of instrument reliability and validity, and observer bias, an open classroom of the Harley School, a private school in Rochester, New York, was visited prior to the collection of data. The observer spent two days taking notes in the classroom and discussing his observations with the classroom teachers. Suggestions from the teachers were heeded concerning relevant observations of the rhythm and daily operation of their open classroom. In addition, the principal and teachers associated with the classroom reacted to the principal and teacher interview schedules. Additions and deletions were exercised where appropriate.

A sixth instrument, the questionnaire for teachers, was used to obtain the supplemental data (Appendix H). It was used in a study by Walberg and Thomas.[141] There are two reasons for the questionnaire's use in this study: (1) A teacher could readily respond to each of fifty short statements. A relatively clear picture of his reactions toward conditions in his open classroom could be obtained in a short period of time. (2) The content of the questionnaire relates to Rathbone's model of open education.[142]

Full permission to use the Walberg and Thomas questionnaire was granted by the Education Development Center.

Data Collection

Each teacher and principal responsible for the selected open classrooms was interviewed. No interview took longer than two hours. The interviews were conducted during the school day and after the regular hours for instruction.

At least four students were selected at random in each classroom and were interviewed during the school day. In two kindergarten classes children had difficulty understanding questions two and four (See Appendix F). Data from these children were obtained mostly from questions one and three (See Appendix F).

A list of parents of the children in the open classroom, and their telephone numbers, was requested from the teacher or principal. Each parent, or set of parents, was assigned a number, and a table of random numbers was used until five parents could be contacted by telephone who agreed to participate in the study. After the study was explained to each parent, the parent questionnaire together with a further explanatory letter and a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope was mailed to those parents who were willing to participate (See Appendix G). Follow-up letters were sent to those parents who had not responded within three weeks. Fourteen of twenty-five questionnaires were returned.

Two days at each school were required for the collection of data. A tape recorder was used during all teacher and principal interviews except for one teacher who preferred not to be recorded.

Presentation of Data in the Study

The following categories are used as a framework in discussing the findings of the five classrooms:

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process
2. Integration of Subject Areas
3. Multi-aged Grouping
4. Competition
5. Attitudes toward Failure
6. Teacher's Role
7. Principal's Role
8. Parental Involvement and Support
9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

Section A presents a description of the five classrooms. Each classroom is discussed separately. Each category listed above is included for classrooms A, B, C, D, and E. Within each category, the following sources of data are presented in the appropriate order that they pertain: preliminary information, observation of the classroom, results of the teacher interview, results of the supervisor's interview, results of the children's interview, and comments from the parents' questionnaire.

In section B, each classroom is compared separately to the model. The findings in each category for classrooms A, B, C, D, and E are compared to the appropriate criteria of the model from which the category is derived.

Section C compares the supplemental data from the teacher questionnaire findings to the model. Each statement in the questionnaire is assigned to one of the following categories:

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process
2. Integration of Subject Areas
3. Psychological Climate
4. Teacher's Role

The categories are derived from the model. Statements are assigned to categories according to their similarity to corresponding points in the model. Teachers from classrooms A-E are not included in these findings.

The advantages of multi-aged grouping, the nature of competition, and the attitudes toward failure are not treated as separate categories in the Walberg and Thomas questionnaire. Rather, a number of statements relating to these categories are included under Rathbone's more general category, "Psychological Climate."

No attempt is made to include the categories regarding parental involvement, the principal's role, or the amount of prior preparation for the open classroom. Without responses from the principals and parents, such data would be incomplete.

The questionnaire choices are ranked as follows:

1. Strongly disagree = 1
2. Disagree = 2

3. Agree = 3
4. Strongly agree = 4

A mean is calculated for each statement. Preliminary information regarding the classrooms is first discussed. Separate tables chart the statements in each category. The statements are related to the model individually and are presented in order from the highest mean to the lowest.

The Conclusions are divided into three parts:

I. A discussion of the similarities and differences of the five classrooms when they are compared to the nine separate categories of the model.

II. A discussion of the similarities and differences of the supplementary data from the teacher questionnaire findings when they are compared to the four separate categories of the model.

III. A comparison of the findings of the five classrooms to the findings of the teacher questionnaires.

Recommendations include suggestions that extend or clarify the findings of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

SECTION A

Classroom Findings

CLASSROOM A

Preliminary Information

Classroom A is part of a school serving an inner-city population. Twenty-five kindergartners attend the classroom for the morning. The classroom is part of a city-wide Follow Through program. Its purpose is to bring rich, appropriate learning materials and experiences to the kindergartner's school activities. The program is designed to affect the total learning environment, and to provide reinforcement of this learning, both at home and in school. The teacher of Classroom A explains that although her classroom receives Follow Through Title I funds, her program is not based on a particular model in current educational philosophy. The classroom is an extension of what she regards to be the best practices of experimental, pre-kindergarten classes that have been conducted in the district for the past three years.

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

(a) The immediate impression conveyed by Classroom A is the sense of orderliness and direction which prevails among the children. Most seem deeply involved in some aspect of the classroom environment.

A large variety of materials and activities are neatly organized on shelves and tables for the children's use. The children are actively using many of the materials. They hardly notice the observer's presence. The teacher invites the observer to walk around the room. He does not want to intrude, but the children treat him as a natural part of the day's routine. The children are cheerful, business-like, open and friendly with the observer. One little girl immediately volunteers to explain the classroom procedure. She says that she receives a "color map" each day which guides her to specific areas (See p. 31). She demonstrates her present task-the correct identification of bean sizes from the noise they make when shaken in a canister. The observer "tests" her. She correctly identifies four of the five rattles. She says simply, "I still have to work on it." She will tell her teacher when she feels she has mastered the task. She will then move on to another task in the area.

The observer asks other children what they are doing. Most of them carefully explain their efforts. Most seem to know what else they have to do in order to master the task at hand. The sense of direction and purposefulness is impressive. The observer talked to few, if any, hesitant, defensive, or anxious children. They converse naturally and confidently. They are participating in the world of the classroom, and they appear eager to do so.

(b) Miss M, the teacher, explains the classroom organization. She has selected five color-coded areas:

(1) Green—Perceptual skills

Example: Organizing blocks according to size or shape.

(2) Yellow—Number activities

Examples: Recognition of numbers, ability to count objects.

(3) Red—Thinking skills

Examples: Puzzles, riddles, and activities involving logic and reasoning.

(4) Blue—Language arts and reading

Examples: Picture books, letter and word recognition games and materials.

(5) White—Creative arts

Examples: Painting, drawing, sewing, and molding clay.

Two other areas are sometimes a part of the day's routine. A piano dominates a music area in one corner of the room. Miss M's desk is piled high with materials related to science and nature exploration.

Each child has his own basket, which contains personal supplies like crayons, clay, and other objects that Miss M periodically adds. For example, that morning she included sewing materials for some of the children to use in the creative arts area.

Each day Miss M puts in every child's basket a "color map." Children move to the colored areas of the room in the order indicated on the "map." Children are encouraged to work in all five areas each day. The minimum requirement is that each child participate in at least one activity in an area before he moves on. He can spend more time if he wants. If Miss M feels a child needs more time in one area, she will have him start the day in the neglected area. As an example, the teacher pointed to a child reading a story with a teacher's aide. The little girl did not like stories and spent only the minimum time in the language arts and reading area. She was not making progress in reading. That day Miss M had started her in the reading area, and the teacher's aide spent an hour and a half reading stories with her. Miss M will continue to steer her toward this area, but will not force her to participate. She explained that children will suddenly be ready for an activity after showing little interest for months. The "color map" merely insures that all children will be regularly exposed to the five areas Miss M believes to be the most important.

The teacher poses a basic question behind her work: "How can I utilize this material into a child's experience?" She stated, "A child's carefully guided 'discoveries' as he uses a wide variety of materials, assures more permanent learning growth than any program of 'planned instruction' or 'talking teaching.'"

(c) Mrs. L, supervisor of Miss M's classroom, adds that a child does receive firm guidance, even though he is not programmed in Miss M's classroom. The supervisor explains, "We want to make sure a child has an idea of where he is going. In Miss M's class a child has some indication in terms of color where to go to." Mrs. L believes, "A child learns by being in a real life context and by involving himself in immediate real life problems." She feels that the atmosphere of "unstructured structure" in Miss M's classroom provides the balance between a child's freedom to make his own meaning, and the guidance necessary to expose him to the areas Miss M feels are important.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

(a) The curriculum involves inter-relationships among subject areas. Words around the room identify particular areas. One little boy asked Miss M where the glue was. She took him over to a sign saying "art supplies" and together they spelled out the letters in the words.

Subject matter integration sometimes occurs spontaneously. A teacher's aide reminded the class that they were not to leave thermometers on the radiator because the heat would ruin them. Miss M turned the incident into a discussion of the "red liquid," and what its rise and fall means.

(b) The teacher believes that integration of subject matter is implicit in much that the children do. Although she plans for integration, she says that it also occurs spontaneously. Children learn numbers by studying a clock. Placing blocks into patterns often involve the creation of a picture. Miss M feels that "learning by doing" is itself an important form of integration.

(c) The supervisor speaks about integration of subject areas in a wider context. She states that one "must integrate school subjects into normal life." She feels that Miss M is doing this by providing an experience-based curriculum.

3. Multi-aged Grouping

Classroom A does not have multi-aged grouping.

4. Competition

(a) Since these children usually do different things at different times, little opportunity seems to exist for them to compete against each other. When children work together, many seem to cooperate with one another more often than compete. The observer frequently sees two children together solving a puzzle or a word game. For example, in a number exercise, one child does the adding while his friend copies down the numbers.

(b) Both teacher and supervisor feel that emulation better describes the nature of competition. Mrs. L believes that a child naturally "wants to move on to the next step." Miss M says emulation is a common occurrence. To illustrate, she described a project in her room.

One of her students was making a large United States map. When he had finished his work and put it on display, other children wanted to make a map. Miss M maintains that children "want to be challenged." Their peers' work becomes a stimulus and a motivator for their own efforts.

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

(a) In the absence of time limitations for the completion of a task, fear of failure is not a noticeable characteristic in Classroom A. Children do not seem to feel defeated if they cannot accomplish a task. They try again or come back to the task later. Children seem very forthright about their successes and failures. They often treat failure as the need to continue work on an uncompleted task. One small boy could not place the arm of a portable record player on the record. He tried several times (apparently he had ruined several needles that week) until he finally succeeded. He beamed triumphantly. Since the class does not work on a continuum of assignments to be completed, individual children are not left behind. Each child can proceed at his own rate until he has accomplished the task.

(b) Both Miss M and Mrs. L agree that fear of failure is not an important factor in the classroom. Mrs. L says, "Greater involvement in the environment leads to more success. Children can reach out more without feeling defeated."

6. Teacher's Role

(a) When the observer enters the classroom, the teacher is not in sight. Only after some searching is she found kneeling on the floor in a corner of the room. She is explaining to four children the game of dominoes. Miss M and the children are absorbed in matching the numbers of the different squares. She rises to greet the observer and then is off again, circulating quietly among the children. She sits down on the floor with three children who are looking at a book. Together, the teacher and children begin identifying words that describe various scenes in the story. Children come up to her and interrupt from time to time. She corrects one child's letters. She helps another wire a battery to a small motor. Each time she goes back to the story.

One teacher's aide is present in the room. She is working with three or four children on Easter baskets. The aide helps children glue down difficult corners. She also cuts out squares from a cardboard that is too thick for the children to snip.

Only a low murmur of voices can be heard in the room. Not once did the teacher or her aide have to remind any child to "take it easy" or "quiet down," even though children were walking about the room and talking constantly and quite naturally throughout the morning.

Although Miss M spends most of the morning with individuals, or small groups of children, she meets with the entire class at the beginning and end of each day. At the beginning of school she takes attendance, and describes any special activities she has prepared for that day. For instance, that morning she had a bowl of dried rice and a large spoon. She showed the children how they could count out portions of the rice. She encouraged each child to try counting for himself some time that morning. At the end of the morning she asked a number of children to show the class what they had accomplished for that day. One little boy had drawn a large fish and several of his classmates commented favorably.

Even though the environment is structured with a multitude of teacher-placed objects and materials, there does not seem to be a coercive or teacher-directed atmosphere. Children are working by themselves or in small groups with the instructional materials. The teacher is not the focus of attention. She seems to be primarily an organizer and reinforcer of the children's activities.

(b) Miss M explains that she spends at least one hour each day rearranging, adding to, and removing activities and materials from the five basic areas. She states that her value consists of knowing when children are ready for particular tasks. Miss M says, "I have definite expectations, but in terms of what each child needs rather than what I want him to do. I find out his needs by talking with him and observing him constantly." She modifies the environment frequently because "each child has particular needs and capacities. These constantly change and grow."

(c) The supervisor confirms much of what Miss M expresses about her own role. Mrs. L observes that Miss M knows what each child is doing because "she is always circulating and talking with the child. There is constant communication about what the child is doing." Mrs. L explains that the essence of Miss M's approach "involves both intellect and emotion. She is their teacher, but also a person to them. The relationship is that of one person to another, rather than a master over her underlings."

7. Principal's Role

(a) The teacher says that the building principal approves of her efforts but has very little to do with the operations of the classroom. Her actual supervisor is Mrs. L who is in charge of all experimental, early childhood programs in the district.

(b) Mrs. L specifies that her role is that of a supporter of Miss M's efforts. She does not mandate any aspect of Miss M's program. She says, "A teacher must feel secure that if something flops she will not be immediately judged for it. Miss M has almost complete autonomy to try what she feels will work." According to Mrs. L administrators "can best support by letting go."

8. Parental Involvement and Support

(a) Miss M says that she places much emphasis on parental involvement. She periodically fills out a "check-up sheet" with both the parent and child present. The child demonstrates at this meeting his degree of mastery in the five basic areas. For example, performance criteria in the language arts and reading area range from the question, "Does he ask for stories to be read to him?" to a more advanced task, "Can he detect small differences in sound patterns?" The child, parent, and teacher go through the list, and each knows immediately how far a child has progressed in each area.

Parents are urged to help at home and in the classroom. At the beginning of the year a folder entitled "Homework for Parents of Kindergarten Children" is sent to parents containing suggestions that will reinforce basic skills their child is learning in the classroom. For example, to encourage their child's articulation, parents are asked, "Do you accept a grunt, fingerpointing, or a nod of the head for an answer or do you encourage your child to answer in words and sentences?"

The teacher declares, "Parents are also asked to spend one hour, one day per week, to assist one child with an assignment concerned with thinking skills." The child is not necessarily their own. She also states, "Parents are asked to prepare mid-morning snacks with high nutritional value and varied textures and tastes. Stuffed celery, walnuts, and tangerines are some of the foods that have been sent."

Miss M summarizes parental involvement by saying, "Parents are being educated along with kids. Since the home environment is even more influential than the classroom, it is important to train parents in how their child learns." Also, "Parents are very pleased with the program," and she adds that they are cooperative and enthusiastic in their participation.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

(a) Both teacher and supervisor maintain that no specific preparation was made for an open classroom. However, Mrs. L states, "The present form of Miss M's classroom evolved because of a basic interest in the individual child and how he learns."

According to Mrs. L, Classroom A is really an extension of work done in the district's early childhood education program already in existence. She indicates that the principles of open education "blend into many of the established ideas of early childhood educational theory."

CLASSROOM B

Preliminary Information

The classroom is part of a school located in a small town dominated by two colleges. Many parents are themselves students. The school housing classroom B is an old mansion built in 1887. It is part of the city school district. The school has a policy of open enrollment. Parents from the city school district can send their children to the school. The staff has volunteered to teach at the school. Many took pay reductions from the district wage schedule because they wanted a lower student-teacher ratio.

Classroom B combines kindergartners, first, and second graders, twenty-four children in all. The room is self-contained part of the day. Children choose their own activities the rest of the day. They move to interest areas such as art and music located in other parts of the school.

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

(a) Classroom B is a large, spacious room with high ceilings. A huge old rug covers much of the floor. Upon entering the room, one is immediately plunged into a bustling, active, noisy environment. Children seem to come and go as they please. Many are walking in the corridors outside the room. Others are chasing each other through the room. One little girl is lying on her stomach in the middle of the rug, laboring on a counting exercise. Another child steps on her and she jumps up to run after him. Two boys are working together in the animal corner on a reading workbook. Mrs. J, the teacher, is sitting at a table with a group of seven or eight children. Another group of four or five children are playing in the sandbox. A student-teacher is reading a story to a frail-looking little girl sitting on his lap. A child with bare feet, and wearing a striped, tattered mechanic's suit comes racing into the room. He calls loudly to the teacher who does not seem to hear him. Noticing the observer, he runs over and begins describing a project of his involving batteries, a light bulb, and some wire. He fetches his "invention" and demonstrates what happens when the bulb is hooked up to the batteries. He seems to have a good understanding of the basic principles of electricity.

Outside the room someone is playing a guitar. He stops and starts frequently. Children continue to run in and out of the classroom, apparently not occupied with definite projects or assignments. Mrs. J's group appears to be the only focal point for an organized, sustained effort at something.

(b) The teacher explains the classroom pattern. She meets with the kindergartners as a group for about one hour each morning and covers the basic skills of number and word identification. During this time, the first and second graders go to gym three times a week and music twice a week. At noon, the kindergartners go home, and Mrs. J spends about an hour and a half each afternoon working on arithmetic, reading, and writing with the first and second graders. When they are not working on the basics, most students are free to move to an interest area of their choice. Although a general policy exists that children should be involved in some activity at all times, this is not rigidly enforced. When Mrs. J is not with her basic groups, she works with individual students who need particular help.

(c) Mr. D, the principal, defines the general nature of student freedom and independence. He explains that what looks like wasted time to an observer is not necessarily so. He feels that children should gain more from school than merely an acquaintance with the traditional subjects. He believes that the sort of student freedom allowed in Mrs. J's classroom enables children to meet and interact constantly with many kinds of teachers and children. He states that such children "will come out of school much better adjusted socially." He adds, "The more an adult interferes, the more dependent a child will become on him."

(d) Some of the children in Classroom B express their own version of the routine. One five year old says, 'We are supposed to do a little math and reading each day. Nothing happens if you don't do it however." Many children like the classroom because they "can play a lot." Most children like the freedom to talk and move about the room.

(e) Parents from Classroom B have distinct opinions when they comment on student freedom. One parent declares,

> We are generally supportive of the new approach. However, we feel that a little more student discipline, directed by the teacher, would be good. The times we have spent at the school, the students have generally been rather rude and made it very hard to carry on with what we were there for—such as showing slides. We feel that freedom carries certain responsibilities in one's behavior toward other people and that this should be learned in the school as well as in the home.

Another parent writes,

> We are supportive of, and very much prefer the open classroom approach. I am most influenced by what I have seen of the way my child's room operates, the way the teacher deals with the children, and the way the children relate to each other. The children are encouraged to learn, and to develop their interests, but they are never forced into situations where they feel they have failed. They are encouraged to work out their individual differences in a constructive manner, and to understand where those differences come from.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

(a) The teacher does not plan for subject matter integration, but she feels it exists. She could only think of general examples where it occurred, such as her students' use of computations in industrial arts.

(b) Mr. D also feels that integration of subject matter is present, but not in specific, planned ways. He states that the school's "utopian dream is to integrate all subject areas completely."

3. Competition

(a) Mrs. J asserts that children "are very aware where other kids are. They are constantly concerned with the question 'Where am I in relation to others?'" In a multi-aged setting, Mrs. J indicates that a child can become anxious about an older student's superior achievement. The teacher says, "I must remind him that his friend has had more time to grow." She feels that competition is a constructive force that "can get kids moving."

4. Multi-aged Grouping

(a) The teacher is very positive about her three intermingled age groups. She affirms, "They must really learn to get along." Mrs. J declares that older children are quite permissive of younger ones and often act as leaders in social settings and subject areas. As an example, one of her second graders regularly tutors a kindergartner who is having difficulty identifying letters. She feels that older children gain a sense of responsibility while providing a peer model for younger children.

(b) One parent maintains that her child "likes the easy atmosphere with peers, older kids, and adults." Another parent states of the multi-aged environment, "I feel that Keith has become more responsive and more responsible. He has gained confidence in himself, and the ability to deal with his feelings, and is better able to appreciate the feelings of others."

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

(a) Fear of failure seems to be practically non-existent in Mrs. J's classroom. There is enough flexibility so that the problems and limitations of almost any child can be dealt with. For example, one kindergartner appeared totally unattached to the activities of the classroom. He wandered about the room at will and remained aloof from the rest of the class. The teacher explains that he is having trouble relating to other children, and that his attention span is limited. She is not forcing him into group lessons because she does not believe he would benefit from them. She hopes that eventually he will settle down. Structuring him at this point would only result in unhappiness and frustration for both of them.

(b) Mrs. J does not feel that a fear of failure exists in her classroom. She could think of no example where failure produced an inhibited or fearful child.

6. Teacher's Role

(a) The teacher in Classroom B is a quiet, gentle, but firm supporter of the children's activities. She is found most frequently with a group of children, sitting with them around a table and working on number exercises, language arts skills, or reading workbooks.

Although the teacher works with two separate groups that children must attend, the nature of her work in the groups seems to be an involvement with each child.

(b) Mrs. J indicates that she has definite guidelines for her class. She depends heavily on workbooks and programmed readers which provide for her the most comfortable form of individualized instruction. She states, "I carry quite a bit in my head. I do not really have to plan extensively."

As a group, children are expected to listen to other people. Mrs. J's insistence on a certain level of quietness often seems to be a losing battle. She will structure children from time to time when she feels they are weak in a particular area. She will remove them from the block area or the sandbox and channel them into directed activities.

She indicates that her pattern remains the same when she is not with the basic group. She works with individuals or small groups of children, reinforcing their projects and gently correcting them if they are having trouble.

(c) The principal summarizes the relationship of teacher to student when he says,

> There is not a complete equality between adults and kids. This may have been true during the first and second year of the school's existence, but teachers now reserve the right to tell a child what is right and wrong.

He believes that "kids are basically conservative and they want some guidelines."

7. Principal's Role

(a) Mrs. J feels that the principal should be a facilitator and should provide a focal point for the faculty. He should have a philosophy that brings the staff together. She does not think that Mr. D has provided enough leadership. For the first year, each teacher operated under his own set of premises. Mrs. J asserts that the program is "now more pulled together but there is still a lack of common goals."

(b) The principal states that his primary role is "teaching kids around school." He does not dictate the curriculum for "if you tell people what to do it destroys creativity and initiative." Fifty per cent of the time he teaches his own classes. He explains that he wants to work with the children: "This is where the important things are happening." He does not want to be looked upon as a threat, but "as another teacher."

8. Parental Involvement and Support

(a) The teacher indicates, "Parents really support the program or else they can send their kids elsewhere." She feels this is a big help.

(b) All parents surveyed attend at least two parent-teacher conferences a year. They are encouraged to attend more if needed. Most parents also attend as many school meetings in the evening as possible. One set of parents had showed their slides of a trip to Taiwan.

The school communicates information to the parents via weekly newsletters. At the end of the year parents receive a written report of their child's progress.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

(a) Mrs. J is critical of the school's preparation for the open classroom. She declares, "Everyone just began cold. It could have been done in a much better way."

(b) The principal also indicates that the staff "jumped into it almost completely blind." He states that at first "everybody could do his own thing. It was chaos." Mr. D maintains that for the first three summers there was a workshop for the staff two weeks before school opened. He states that many evenings were also spent in preparation for the open classroom. This was not adequate, however, for many problems were not recognized until school began. The staff was finally compelled to schedule some subjects. He feels that the program materialized because there is a "real commitment by the staff that it must work."

CLASSROOM C

Preliminary Information

Classroom C is a large three room cluster of seventy-five children. The space is open to all students. Differentiated Teaching Staffing is in effect. In the cluster one master teacher supervises two senior teachers who in turn supervise two associate teachers. There are part-time teacher's aides and parent volunteers who help. Each teacher has a "family group" of about fifteen children. The students themselves are a combination of fifth and sixth graders. The district is suburban, with a mixture of executive, white collar and blue collar occupations.

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

(a) The cluster occupies one side of a hall near the school office. Many children are working by themselves at tables or on the wall-to-wall carpeted floor. Other children are grouped around a teacher who is conducting a formal lesson. Some students are out in the hall selecting materials from a large variety of shelves and drawers bursting with papers. Most students seem to be busily occupied. There appears to be little random movement. Children are talking, but in quiet, controlled tones.

Across the hall a puppeteer from a nearby performing arts group is acting out Hansel and Gretel with several marionettes. The children are quiet and attentive. Two or three teachers stand watchfully on the sidelines.

(b) Mrs. B, the master teacher, describes the pattern in the cluster. Math and language arts are "essential" skills. Greatest emphasis is placed on these. Science, social studies, art, music, and shop, as well as physical education are also part of the curriculum, but not as heavily emphasized. The teachers in Classroom C are responsible for math, language arts, science and social studies. The children go elsewhere for art, music, shop and physical education. In each of the four subject areas the teachers have drawn up a series of performance objectives to be covered by each student. A teacher plans with each of his students a course of study for two weeks at a time. The child's assignments are based upon his needs and his ability to cover the material. For example, language arts is divided into vocabulary, reading comprehension, and study skills. A chart lists a number of books under each of the sections. The teacher can select any combination of these materials, according to what he perceives as appropriate for the child. All three categories are covered on a regular basis.

The teachers in Classroom C depend upon objective tests to pinpoint a child's level of achievement at the beginning of the year. A test determines a child's achievement at the end of the year and children are also tested at regular intervals during the year. For example, a child may spend two weeks working on a vocabulary unit. He is tested at the end of that unit. A child must repeat certain pages or exercises until he is able to pass the test.

Children in the cluster spend about fifty per cent of their time in classes conducted by the teacher. Students are grouped by ability to cover basic skills in language arts and math. They spend the remaining time working on their individual plans of study. The plans of study parallel the group lessons. Each day a child checks off work as he completes it.

A tighter structure exists for "low ability" children. A teacher structures their schedules daily. As Mrs. B explains, "These children are told exactly what to do and when to do it."

Teachers like the plans of study. As Mrs. B states, "Children have a tendency to do less and less. We can see how much effort he's made each day."

In science and social studies a little more flexibility is allowed. Children can choose when they want to cover either science or social studies. However, as Mrs. B asserts, "Both areas must eventually be covered anyway. The children just think they have a choice."

The master teacher states that the resource folders for each unit are in the hall. For example, various units prepared for the science program are stored in files in the hall. Children can help themselves as they need the material.

Summarizing the program in Classroom C, Mrs. B declares, "Teachers know what they are doing, but do not let children know they are being structured."

(c) Mr. M, the principal, further defines the program. Although he describes the curriculum in classroom C as part of "a very pre-determined format," he also feels that "human relations are important—the ability to communicate with other people and to interact more effectively with them." He feels that the program in Classroom C allows for more creativity and individuality. It also enables children to come to their own conclusions after being "motivated, monitored and observed by an adult." He feels the program must be structured because it would otherwise be possible for "a child to go through six years and not acquire any of the basic skills."

(d) Children have their own reactions to the amount of freedom and independence allowed them. One sixth grade girl states, "We must work on assigned stuff each day. We can't really do anything except work on our plans of study." She indicates that she likes to walk around and talk to other children but that "the teacher doesn't really like that." She has some free time "once in a while if I finish all my work." She says, "I don't do anything I don't have to do. The teacher tells me what to do. I do as I'm told."

She sees no advantages in the new system. She feels she works harder now than when she was in a traditional classroom.

A fifth grade boy likes the present setup better then his old classroom because "I can move around more." He declares that the teacher selects what he is supposed to do.

A black sixth grade girl indicates that the noise bothers her. It is hard for her to find a quiet place to study. She says, "I am learning more now because I have to."

(e) One parent states of her son's reaction to Classroom C,

> I think my son was excited at first by what he called 'freedom' to do what he wanted when he wanted to do it; he pretty much made his own schedule, with some supervision, of course. But as time progressed, he was bewildered and frustrated, feeling, I believe, the need for closer supervision and guidance.

Another parent says,

> My child did not like the complex when school started. He is a child who needs much attention which you don't get in a complex. It has, however, helped him be more responsible since he has a contract to fulfill with his teacher every other week.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

(a) The master teacher does not think that subject matter integration is an important element in the classroom.

(b) Mr. M does not believe that teachers are ready for subject matter integration. He explains, "Teachers do not yet have the skill to relate subjects to each other." He adds, "I want to make sure that some subjects are not neglected because they are all blended together."

3. Multi-aged Grouping

(a) Mrs. B favors multi-aged grouping. She feels that older children often help younger ones. However, she could not think of specific examples when this occurred.

(b) Children feel differently. Two fifth graders do not like to be mixed in with sixth graders because the older children pick on them. Another fifth grade girl also dislikes the grouping. She could not give a reason. One sixth grade girl resents the fifth graders because "they are always messing things up."

4. Competition

(a) Children often seem to compare progress made on each others' plans of study. Many friends seem to be competing good-naturedly over completion of a project.

(b) Mrs. B maintains, "Only the teacher knows where a child is. Slower students do not feel embarrassed or defeated. All the children are working on different things and they don't care where the others are."

(c) One sixth grade girl was bothered by younger children competing with her. She says, "I don't like the fifth graders around because they want to graduate with us."

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

(a) Mrs. B believes that fear of failure is a minor factor in Classroom C. Since teachers have a small group of children and can program them individually, children move at their own rate of speed. According to Mrs. B, "Children do not feel the pressure of group standards. Even in teacher-directed meetings children are grouped as homogeneously as possible."

6. Teacher's Role

(a) Teachers in Classroom C appear to have the program highly organized. Most are teaching either a group of ten to fifteen students or working with one or two students on an individual basis. The observer watched both a math class and a spelling session. Children listened attentively to the math teacher who was explaining long division. The children then broke into smaller groups and worked on exercises that the teacher passed out.

Children in the spelling group seemed restless and uninterested. The teacher constantly reminded children to pay attention and at one point loudly shouted for a boy to "quit horsing around."

(b) The master teacher states that teachers individualize the instruction as much as possible. She says, "A little over fifty per cent of the time a teacher works on a one-to-one basis within her group of fifteen students." Teachers present new concepts to a group not necessarily their own. Mrs. B declares that teachers "try to get kids on their own as fast as possible." Children can leave the group without permission if they feel they understand the concept.

Students can go to any teacher in the cluster for help. Most go to their "family group" teacher. Children can use any book or resource material in the room. According to Mrs. B, workbooks and textbooks are not used on a regular basis. Teachers tear them apart to get at materials they need. As Mrs. B says, "The program is not sequenced according to one or two textbooks; however, it is still a tightly structured sequence according to what the teacher wants rather than what the textbook demands."

(c) The principal adds, "The important thing about a teacher is the interaction that takes place between his students and himself."

7. Principal's Role

(a) Mrs. B states that the principal had the original idea for an open classroom. He left its development and implementation up to the teachers. He does not work with children in the classroom. Mrs. B half jokingly referred to his infrequent visits to the classroom as "snooping."

(b) The principal sees himself as "a motivator, a person responsible for guiding change." He has "the power that gets people involved in change." Eventually, he sees the master teacher totally in charge of the program. He sees his future role "as a public relations man who also orders the window shades and takes care of other such tasks." He feels his position could be phased out.

8. Parental Involvement and Support

(a) The master teacher states that the parents do not visit the classroom as often as they used to. She feels that this is "a good sign because they feel more secure about the program." They better understand the operations of the classroom. Mrs. B also believes parents should be more involved in the program. More parents should serve as volunteers and teacher's aides.

According to Mrs. B parental support falls into three categories:

(1) Those who feel "the complex is absolutely tremendous

(they are usually the better educated)."

(2) Those who "can't make up their mind now but won't give us any trouble."

(3) Those who "are critical. They think that children must have homework every night. They don't believe children are learning when they are walking in the halls and talking."

(b) Mr. M states, "Not a single parent is one hundred per cent enthusiastic." However, he indicates that parents are not as disturbed with the program as they once were. When the open classroom began parents commonly called it "a jungle." He feels it is important that parents be kept closely informed of the school's operations.

The principal recently created a parents' advisory committee. He also communicates with parents through coffee hours, newsletters, and the PTA. In addition, the cluster is always open to parents. Mr. M feels that he is effectively communicating with the parents.

(c) One parent reports that she is a choral director for the cluster. Another is a teacher's aide. A third parent indicates that she was a para-professional for one and one-half years in Classroom C.

Parents are kept informed of their children's progress by periodic parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Report cards are sent home at the end of the year.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

(a) Mrs. B explains that they began the cluster with no real prior preparation. Teachers met two weeks before the opening of school to plan for the new program. She states, "It was very difficult. We learned as we went along. We did a lot of backtracking." She feels there should have been much more planning. She says, "I like to organize things, but Mr. M likes to just leap in."

(b) The principal states that he, his staff, and the community spent a year preparing for the open classroom. For example, he visited similar programs in other schools. Most of the planning dealt with the organization of the intended space.

CLASSROOM D

Preliminary Information

The classroom is part of a school serving a small town in central New York. Most of the families are employed in a large factory that adjoins the town. The school housing Classroom D is new. In its design allowances were made for the "open plan" concept.

The classroom is a large, open expanse containing about seventy-five kindergartners. Four teachers work as a team. Each has a group of children, but all share each others' students in the course of activities during the day.

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

(a) Classroom D is a bright, attractive room. Areas of the room are designated for blocks, math, reading, art, animals, and drama.

One's first impression is the dominance of groups of children. Few work alone. For the first hour of the morning each teacher supervises a separate group of children for a particular activity. One group works with paints, another cuts out and pastes together Easter baskets, a third teacher plays counting games, and a fourth acts out a drama with an accompanying song. Later in the morning, all seventy-five students watch a movie together.

Children meet with their "family" teacher briefly in the morning. They do not re-assemble again as a homeroom group until lunch. Afternoon rest periods are with the family group. Children also meet with their homeroom group at the end of the day.

Brief play periods before lunch in the morning and before the children go home in the afternoon appear to be the only time when children are not grouped.

(b) Mr. D, the teacher, explains that the teachers in Classroom D work closely together as a team. He states, "Most of the time an activity is open to any student who wants to participate. At times, however, teachers steer a child toward a particular group if the child needs exposure to the activities in that group."

Teachers are in charge of the organization of activities. Mr. D says, "It's hard to get information from kids at this age about what they want to do. They don't have a good context from which to judge things." He indicates that the classroom is definitely "teacher-oriented." He states, "I cannot see where kids can just decide for themselves what they want to do."

Activities are oriented toward "readiness skills." These involve basic number and word recognition, learning to work with children and adults, and learning how to share. Different skills are stressed from week to week. Over-all, the teachers try to prepare children for the academic and psychological demands of the first grade and succeeding years.

The team is thinking of incorporating a series of readiness workbooks into the program. Mr. D likes the idea of insuring "that all children are at the same level of preparation by first grade." He indicates that the team wants more concreteness and sequence in their program: 'With the workbooks we will have the planning done for us and then we just have to feed into it."

Mr. D maintains that children do not necessarily have to be involved in groups. He states, "Children can just go into a corner and sit if they want to. There is a genuine freedom. However, if a kid is just plain fooling around, we grab him and channel him."

(c) Mr. W, the principal, affirms, "The activities in the classroom are part of the important pre-academic readiness areas, but also their pursuit insures us that each child is covering a certain minimum." Children in the classroom are uniformly prepared to enter first grade.

(d) One parent expresses the following opinion:

> This form of teaching gives the child a sense of responsibility in being able to choose some of the things that he wants to do within a given time. Also, the children are not bored by sitting in one place or one room all day. They are given the opportunity to move around and mingle with other classes and this in itself freshens the child's attitudes.

Another parent says,

> My son does not seem to be learning anything. I do not feel it is the teacher but this new school program because they do not have to participate if they do not want to.

One parent is specific in her reaction. She states,

> The things that bother me are, no chairs. They sit on the floor all day. They take naps on the floor. This is fun for them but hard on cloths [sic]. When [my daughter] is home I yell to get off the floor and sit in a chair. They had to have sneekers [sic] for school, yet she comes home and her socks are awful. They didn't have time to put on the sneekers [sic].

(e) Children generally appear enthusiastic. Typically they like the freedom to move around. They are eager to talk with visitors. Most seem open and friendly. As many as ten or twelve children gathered around the observer at one time. A visiting policeman dwarfed the children but was swamped by questions. He had difficulty retrieving his hat from the curious children.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

(a) There does not seem to be any visible attempt to integrate subject areas. Teachers conduct particular activities at organized times. There are groups for math, reading, art, and drama, but the observer noticed no conscious attempt to combine subjects.

(b) Mr. D states, "Integration occurs in an informal way. We do not plan for it, but I suppose children do relate what they have learned in one area to other areas."

3. Multi-aged Grouping

Classroom D does not have multi-aged grouping.

4. Competition

(a) The teacher declares that there is considerable competition. He says, "It is not teacher-initiated. Students just want to do better than another." As an example, Mr. D indicates that a child watching his friend's number sheet or observing him writing his name "wants to do what he sees his friend doing. The child thinks that's good." He asserts that there is a minimum of "negative competition." For example, children are not pressured by teachers if they are unable to write their names.

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

(a) According to Mr. D, failure is treated in a matter-of-fact way. Rather than emphasize the mistakes, he stresses the good aspects of a project. If a child does something well, he will show it to the entire family group. He avoids comparing children's work. He does not suggest to a child, "This picture is good. Why don't you try and make one like it?"

6. Teacher's Role

(a) Mr. D indicates that all four teachers in the cluster know all seventy-five children moderately well. He knows his "family group" only slightly better. He sees himself primarily as an organizer and leader of children.

The teachers prepare most of the materials and decide each day what activities will be scheduled that day. They plan for the next day after the children leave and before school the following morning. Mr. D does not spend much time planning his own activities. He explains, "There are already a multitude of things in the classroom. We have a large picture file assembled and a card file of stories, games, tapes, records, and movies. Most planning is done at school. At home I would rather get away from it for awhile."

The teacher asserts that although he plans for the group as a whole, he works with individual students within the group. He states, "Each child is involved with different skills in the activity."

In the morning, Mr. D also takes care of the animals, sets up his share of activities for the day, and occasionally makes new materials. Mr. D states, "If you're excited and planned you don't have to worry. You're motivated and the kids are also. You must be prepared or else it's chaos. Some days, however, they are just out of sorts. Still you don't shout. You just get them into an area and let them go."

(b) The principal wants the teachers in Classroom D to be "data collectors" as well as "instructors in the readiness areas." He feels that the gathering of general knowledge about the child is essential for future teachers.

Mr. W is enthusiastic about the possibilities of Classroom D's "open plan" and the teaming of teachers. He likes the efficiency of common interest areas rather than having separate centers for each teacher. He feels it advantageous for the staff to use each others' talents in a common effort.

7. Principal's Role

(a) Mr. D indicates that the teachers are on their own to devise the program. He adds, "Mr. W is supportive of our efforts, but his idea of open education goes through the whole building." For example, Mr. W recently published a booklet which outlined what he expected from his teachers in regards to open education. Mr. D says, "I'm not surprised to see Mr. W in the classroom. He doesn't really work with the kids, however. He's sort of an observer."

(b) The principal sees himself as the "head of the building who gives support and direction to the teachers on his staff." He gets into the classroom but feels he should spend more time than he does. He meets periodically with the cluster groups and talks with the teachers about their plans. He also presents his expectations to the team.

8. Parental Involvement and Support

(a) The teacher declares that parents do not visit the classroom very much: "They come for birthday parties and that is about it."

(b) Mr. W states that three groups of parents exist in the community: "The apathetic, the 'anti' forces, and the whole-hearted supporters." He feels he is fortunate in this respect. He finds it effective to be firm with parents. His approach is, "We're going to do these things" rather than "What would you like us to do?"

(c) The parents' responses do not reveal that they volunteer to help in Classroom D's program. Only one was involved at all and she indicated that she "was called upon to help."

Parents state that they can choose four written reports, four parent-teacher conferences, or any combination of the two. The parents in the survey all chose to receive two written reports and meet for two parent-teacher conferences.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

(a) The teacher explains that the team "just charged into this approach." He had read nothing about open education previously, "just a few books on readiness levels."

(b) Mr. W also asserts that neither he nor his staff had had any background in open education before implementing the program. He states that the present open classroom evolved from a team-teaching, in-service course at the school. He says, "We just sort of slipped into the open classroom idea. I'm still not sure whether this is not just team-teaching."

CLASSROOM E

Preliminary Information

The classroom is part of a campus school at a state college in New York. Although the school is public, children are selected for admission. As a result, most parents do not apply to the school unless they support the program.

A poll conducted by the school identifies eighteen per cent of the parents as "college trained."

The school has an early childhood program of two, three, four, and five year olds. The primary level combines six, seven, and eight year olds. Nine, ten, and eleven year olds make up the intermediate level.

Classroom E contains a mixture of twenty-four nine, ten, and eleven year olds. The children meet together each day for an hour and a half as a "family group" to cover math, reading, and language arts. These subjects and physical education are required. The children move to "interest areas" of their choice during the rest of the day. A large chart in the family room indicates the available periods of science, social studies, creative writing, industrial arts, music, home economics, and art. At the beginning of each week children sign up for their week's choice of activities. The primary and intermediate groups mingle freely in the "interest areas." They are separated for math, reading and language arts. The early childhood program is independent of both groups.

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

(a) A busy group of children confront the visitor to Classroom E. Children are moving about and talking in every part of the room. Some are reading at desks placed along a wall, others are conducting "science experiments," and a few children are talking by the windows in a small group. Mr. G, the teacher, is not in sight. A friendly boy declares, "He is down the hall getting supplies."

Most students seem to be occupied with some project or activity. Many are working on different subjects. Most prominent are science projects. A large fish tank occupies one wall. A table is next to it piled high with "junk." A small room in one corner contains Mr. G's office. The outlines of a desk and filing cabinet are barely visible. A mountain of books, half-completed projects, miscellaneous batteries, wires, bolts, boards, model airplanes, and tools completely engulf the room. Across the room hangs a large map of Europe. Two students appear to be working on a geography exercise nearby. Other students seem to be occupied with assignments in math and language arts. Mr. G returns with a large quantity of new science supplies. He is a gentle-looking, older man with a large moustache. Several children immediately surround him with demands for his supplies. He appears patient and methodical. He places the material on a desk near the middle of the room and immediately begins helping a student on his science project. Other children ask him for help. They appear to depend upon him as the classroom's resource and fix-it person.

One is immediately struck by the natural and casual relationship between Mr. G and his students. The teacher seems to know the status of each child's project. He talks matter-of-factly about their needs and plans. Mr. G is warm and unpretentious with the children. He appears genuinely absorbed in the progress of his students. They in turn ask him for advice and seem to take his suggestions seriously. Mr. G does not seem to be going through "teaching motions." He seems to be contributing needed information which the children want.

(b) The teacher explains that he is basically a social studies teacher. He also has a strong interest in science. Students come to him from all parts of the building for advice with their science projects. He indicates that he is digging a pond two feet deep by twenty feet wide in the nearby woods with his students so they can better observe animal and plant life. He is also setting up a nature trail.

Mr. G describes the program. He teaches reading and language arts to his homeroom group for one hour in the morning. He teaches math for one half hour in the afternoon. The rest of the day his students are free to select any activity they want. For example, one child can elect to sign up for social studies, science, industrial arts and music. Another child can choose creative writing, home economics, science and art.

The teacher asserts that most of his work with the students is "individualized, with children working at their own rate." Although there are certain school-wide expectations in the basic subjects, Mr. G explains that he does not feel pressured to "cover so many things in a certain amount of time." Because students are now with him for two or three years, and because he can now work with them on an individual basis, he feels he can be much more effective. Mr. G maintains, "In this setting you are not just throwing material at the students. Now I can work with individual students and have each one see how he really relates to the subject." He explains, "I can now take time out with individual kids. I couldn't do this in a regular classroom." He expresses the relationship between himself and his students as "fantastic. You must work in the situation to believe it." He feels that children are now far easier to work with. As an example, he explains that six children in his classroom had been identified as having "emotional handicaps." He states, "I simply do not find any evidence of this now that they are in this environment."

(c) Mr. T, the principal, affirms, 'We have a structured program. The kids have opportunities to choose but in a closed framework. They have to make a choice and follow through on it." Mr. T adds, "The children must choose some activity all through the day."

(d) One nine year old from Classroom E likes the program "because I can go from place to place." However, she does not seem to vary the activities she has chosen. She states that she signs up each week for "social studies, creative writing, home economics, and music." Once in a while she goes to industrial arts. A ten year old also likes the freedom to move around. She says, "You're not all cooped up. I can move around and get into different subjects." She could not think of anything about the program she did not like.

Most of the children interviewed were enthusiastic about the freedom to choose their own subjects. Few could think of anything they did not like. The interviews gave the impression of a happy, relaxed group of children who enjoyed the program.

(e) The mother of the nine year old interviewed states, "My daughter likes school very much—primarily because of the diversity of subjects offered." She also expresses some reservations. She is not sure so much freedom for a child is beneficial. She asserts,

> At the first of the year they floundered around switching from one thing to another and gaining very little from their short visits here and there. They will then settle down to one schedule and stick to it from then on—rarely changing.

She continues, "How can a teacher be of any real help to a child when she or he doesn't know if the child will be in their class from week to week?"

She also believes that children are given too much freedom of choice. She is concerned that if children show no interest in a subject they will not be exposed to it. As an example, she declares that her daughter is not interested in science and does not include it on her schedule. She does not feel science and social studies should be electives.

She concludes,

> The open classroom may have its advantages in more one-to-one relationships, more relaxed and informal learning and having children compete with themselves. It has disadvantages in developing an attitude of 'I only have to do what I want to do.'

Another parent says,

> My child loves school there. He feels it is 100% improvement over the public school. There are no male-female hangups (shop and home economics for both boys and girls). There are no discipline problems and no need for rules since children are not reacting negatively—school's too much fun.

She adds, "My son feels that school is an extension of home where kids are treated as people."

2. Integration of Subject Areas

(a) The teacher explains that there is no concerted effort among teachers to integrate subject areas. As he puts it, "There is no coordination among the teachers. Everyone is doing his own thing." He believes that any overlap that occurs is generally by accident. Mr. G would rather see more relating of subject areas to each other.

However, Mr. G finds that students inter-relate subjects on their own. As an example, a mother called him up one night to tell him about a television program on dinosaurs. Her daughter, who was Mr. G's student, was too shy to call, but had been working on a dinosaur project in his room and wanted him to know about the program.

3. Multi-aged Grouping

(a) Mr. G declares, "Children of several age levels interact very well, even without being asked or told." He feels that the idea of a "family room" is good. He explains, "All the children have a communal sense about it." He finds that the more capable children are usually glad to help those having trouble. Slower students will often ask more advanced ones for help.

Mr. G particularly emphasizes the model older children provide. He feels younger students are often motivated to achieve when they see superior results before them.

4. Competition

(a) The teacher states, "Children measure against themselves rather than someone else. Everyone is doing a different thing anyway." Mr. G explains that sometimes younger children get frustrated because they cannot perform at the level of an older child. He has to assure the child that his older friend has had more time to learn the material. He encourages a younger child to compare his efforts with an older child only as a way of "seeing how you're growing." He also tries to emphasize each child's individual talents which mark him from other children. The teacher explains to a child, "Some are more capable than you in some ways and less capable than you in other ways."

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

(a) Mr. G specifies, "Children learn that mistakes aren't bad in themselves." Most children take errors in stride. He states, "They only get disturbed if I'm not available and they need help after they have gone wrong somewhere. They want to correct it, and get frustrated if they don't get on with the task."

6. Teacher's Role

(a) The teacher explains, "Under this system I try harder because I am now much closer to each child. I can see each of their problems and their growth in detail and I just want to help them more." He states that he is "not so much concerned with my position in the classroom—whether I might get fired if I don't get them all through at least a minimum amount. Now I just really want to see them learn." He specifies that he still sets up plans in math, reading, language arts, and his interest areas similar to those in a traditional classroom; however, he now "knows exactly what the needs of each child are and I plan in terms of these needs." Mr. G's assigned tasks reflect more the child's individual capabilities and interests. He no longer prepares a common plan for the whole class.

(b) The principal states, "The teachers now have the opportunity to do what they think is important for the child and can now blend it into the program." He feels that it is more work for the teacher: "He must now keep track of twenty-five individual programs if he has twenty-five students. This does not include the children he works with in the interest areas."

7. Principal's Role

(a) Mr. G asserts, "The principal is a facilitator. He makes sure that the program runs smoothly. He knows the teachers and most of the students very well but doesn't get into the classrooms." He feels Mr. T is a traditional administrator who happens to communicate well with the teachers.

(b) The principal states, "I am less of an administrator than most public school people. I am less of an individual decision-maker now." He says, "The teachers have decided what to teach kids and who will do it. They meet as a group. I have a say but I go along with any decisions they make." He indicates that he is still "involved with giving teachers equipment and ordering materials."

8. Parental Involvement and Support

(a) The teacher explains that he sees all parents at least once a year. If necessary, he sees some as often as fifteen or twenty times a year. He declares, "The parents have formed a council that gets involved in everything. Their advice is considered, but they don't have any real impact in the classroom." He feels that the majority of parents "are satisfied, very much so."

(b) Mr. T indicates that the parents were initially "shook up." He met with parents during the year prior to implementation and finally convinced them that "the school was going to do it." He invited the parents to visit as much as they wanted when the program began. He declares, "Parents were all over the school in the beginning." He states that now they seem to accept the idea and do not visit as much.

(c) Two parents in the survey indicated that they did not participate at all. One parent is a "parent volunteer." She states, "I help out whenever needed—giving tours to visitors, aiding classroom teachers, helping on field trips. I could teach if I wanted to." Another is chairman of the "Parent Volunteer Committee." She is in charge of twenty-one parents who volunteer in the school each week.

Most parents say that they are encouraged to visit the school whenever they wish. Formal conferences with as many teachers as the parents desire are scheduled in January. All parents specify that they receive a formal report card in June.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

(a) Mr. G asserts that there was not much planning before the new program. Everyone "just began." A teacher committee met late in the year prior to the new program, but they were concerned only with the "nuts and bolts of actual implementation."

(b) The principal states that he and the faculty were involved in formal planning for a year before the actual program. He and several teachers spent four months viewing similar programs prior to the first year. He declares that about seventy-five per cent of the staff were involved one way or another in the long range planning. Mr. T defines "long range planning" mostly in terms of the strategy, and practical problems of implementation. Convincing the parents was a major part of his prior preparation.

SECTION B

Comparison of Classroom Findings to Model

CLASSROOM A

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

Although Classroom A is structured, children seem to be able to interact on an individual basis with a large variety of materials and activities in the environment. The minimum requirement of daily circulation in each of five basic areas does not seem to impede a child's involvement with the classroom materials. Learning appears to be self-initiated, since a child chooses the sources of his involvement in each area. The daily sequence of areas to be visited is chosen for him by the teacher. A child is able to vary his time at one activity as his interest and ability dictate. There is no noticeable pressure to cover a certain minimum.

Children talk with each other and the teacher about their activities. Children frequently show their achievements to the teacher. She seems genuinely interested. Children work with each other and seem to be exchanging ideas. Not much idle chatter is evident. Rathbone's statement by and large seems to be true of Classroom A:

> The reactions of people to a child and his activities help him gain a more realistic perspective and understanding not only in his subsequent interactions with other people but in his comprehension of the properties and uses of things in his environment.

In summary, Classroom A seems to involve the independent movement of twenty-five kindergartners, each deeply involved with a separate aspect of the classroom environment. Children are "messing about" with a large variety of materials and activities and seem busy, happy, and confident.

Children appear to be doing what Rathbone says they do in open classrooms: "Making meaning wherever meaning can be made."

2. Integration of Subject Areas

Consistent with the model, the teacher in Classroom A seems to make an attempt at subject matter integration. She is conscious of subject area overlap. For example, she often reviews numbers while reading a story. Her examination of a clock with the students also involves number sequence. However, by the teacher's own admission, subject areas are separated so that she is better able to keep track of a child's progress in individual areas. Materials are assigned to one of the five basic areas. Children work with materials in a particular area and then move on to the materials of another area. A child can pursue "whatever question interests him" within the structure of the five basic areas.

Class lessons are minimized, and occur primarily to organize the school day and to conclude the morning's activities.

3. Multi-aged Grouping

Classroom A does not have multi-aged grouping.

4. Competition

Classroom A seems consistent with the model: "A child finds difficulty competing when each is engaged in a different task." Both the teacher and supervisor describe competition in terms of "emulation." In the words of the supervisor, as a child observes the progress of his peers, he naturally "wants to move on to the next step."

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

Fear of failure is not a noticeable characteristic of Classroom A. Children seem to treat failure as the need to continue work on an uncompleted task. The supervisor states, "Greater involvement in the environment leads to more success. Children can reach out more without feeling defeated."

6. Teacher's Role

Rathbone's description seems to summarize accurately the teacher's role in Classroom A:

> In open education a teacher does not pass down certain facts, skills, or concepts to a student, but rather presents a lateral interchange between two persons of nearly equal status, one of whom may need something possessed by the other.

The teacher in Classroom A works with the children. She is difficult to find in the classroom because she is usually working on the floor with the children, seemingly offering her support and helping them with their individual efforts. Children go to her with problems, but otherwise work by themselves. She circulates among the children and will interrupt only when she questions them on the progress of one of their activities. She usually does not solve or complete a task for a child, even if he is having difficulty. Rathbone seems to describe accurately her role:

> A teacher does not present answers or, indeed, always well-articulated questions. He is to offer, instead, opportunities around which a child can formulate his own questions and from which he can derive his own satisfactory answers.

In every sense, the teacher in Classroom A seems to be in Rathbone's words:

> A trained observer, diagnostician of individual needs, presenter of environments, consultant, flexible resource, psychologically supportive relator, general facilitator of the learning requirements of an independent agent, and collaborator.

7. Principal's Role

Although the supervisor of Classroom A does not teach, she offers almost complete support for the teacher's efforts. She says,

> A teacher must feel secure that if something flops she will not be immediately judged for it. [The teacher] has almost complete autonomy to try what she feels will work.

An administrator sensitive to and supportive of the teaching efforts of an open classroom teacher is an important element of the model's description of a principal.

8. Parental Involvement and Support

The teacher of Classroom A, according to her own description, has almost complete and enthusiastic parental support for her efforts in the classroom. Parents are also heavily involved in the classroom's operations. With the parent(s) and teacher present, a child periodically demonstrates his degree of mastery in the five basic areas. Also, at the beginning of the year, the teacher sends a kit to all parents which contains suggestions for reinforcing basic skills their children are learning in the classroom.

Parents are also asked to spend one hour, one day per week assisting one child with an assignment concerned with thinking skills. In addition, parents are urged to send mid-morning snacks with high nutritional value. Summarizing parental involvement, the teacher states, "Parents are being educated along with kids. Since the home environment is even more influential than the classroom, it is important to train parents how their child learns." The category seems to closely resemble the model's description of parental involvement.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

Although no specific preparation was made for Classroom A, both teacher and supervisor indicate that many concepts were applicable from the district's already-existing early childhood education program which was already in existence. Both had been involved in this program. According to the supervisor, open education seems to be a natural extension of "many of the established ideas of early childhood educational theory."

No in-service training was offered as described in the model.

CLASSROOM B

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

Ostensibly, the environment of Classroom B seems to be consistent with Rathbone's description of a child as an "active, crucial agent in his own learning process—learning is the result of this self-initiated, individual interaction with the world he inhabits." Children have almost complete freedom in Classroom B to interact with the environment as they choose. However, a key difference seems to exist between Classroom B and the model. There is not an organized multiplicity of materials and activities available to a child in the classroom. Involvement with subject matter areas occurs daily in the form of a teacher-directed class. Math, reading, and writing are taught as separate subjects, and are presented in a sequential, workbook-oriented approach.

Children's activities in the classroom often seem random and superficial. When most children are not involved in their structured class time, they play tag in the room, romp about in the halls, and squabble in the sandbox area. A few children are working at individual tasks about the room. Two boys are occupied with a reading workbook. They tell the observer that they have received an assignment from the teacher in preparation for that day's class. One of the boys states when asked whether he has to complete the task, 'We are supposed to do a little math and reading each day. Nothing happens if you don't do it however."

A little girl was working on what appeared to be a math assignment. She was lying on her stomach in the middle of the floor and seemed oblivious of the loud din around her. Her activities abruptly terminated, however, when a child stepped on her and she took off in close pursuit.

The overall impression of the children in Classroom B is that of an exuberantly free group of children who have very little if any sustained or deep involvement with the classroom environment. Rathbone states, "The only satisfaction, the only reinforcement that counts importantly in learning is that which accrues from discovery, from finding structure and order in our individual and unique experience." Most discovery seems to come during the daily class session. Children are "messing about," but not as David Hawkins defines the term. Children do not seem to be "making meaning" as part of a mastery of their environment for two reasons: (a) there are few activities and materials present with which a child can work, and (b) children spend most of their time running about the room in seeming celebration of practically unlimited quantities of uncontrolled freedom.

The model emphasizes the importance of one-to-one relationships between students and instructional material as part of a child's freedom to "absorb and accommodate to his environment at his own rate and in his own way." The children in Classroom B seem to lack an effective relationship between themselves and instructional materials. Freedom to move about generally does not seem directed toward a productive end.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

There is not much evidence of subject matter integration in Classroom B. The teacher did not specify its occurrence in the classroom. The subject matter areas are separated, and little overlap seems to occur. The teacher depends heavily on sequential workbooks and textbooks.

3. Competition

The teacher feels that children "are very aware where other kids are." Since she is mostly involved with children in a class setting, her comments are not applicable to the model's prediction: "There is a deemphasis of competition when children are actively engaged in different tasks."

4. Multi-aged Grouping

Although little peer cooperation was observed, the teacher of Classroom B states, "Older children are quite permissive of younger ones and often act as leaders in social settings and subject areas." She indicates that some of her older students tutor younger ones. This would be consistent with Rathbone, who asserts, "Flexible peer-interaction provides role models in the persons of older children: a younger child can often learn more quickly what is expected of him if he has a suitable peer-model."

5. Fear of Failure

Consistent with the model, fear of failure does not seem to be an element in Classroom B. The teacher feels that children in the permissive atmosphere of Classroom B seldom experience failure.

6. Teacher's Role

Rathbone describes a teacher as a "presenter of environments—and a general facilitator of the learning requirements of an independent agent." Each child in the teacher's groups cannot be described as "an independent agent." The teacher is in charge and she chooses what materials will be presented to the class. Children follow a sequential pattern in math, language arts, and reading. Regular assignments are made in workbooks and programmed readers.

However, the nature of the teacher's involvement with individual students seems to be more consistent with the model. She generally works with individual children within the group. When not with the group she maintains that she is similarly occupied with individual or small groups of children. In this sense, to use Rathbone's words, she seems to be a "flexible resource and a psychologically supportive relator." Although she remains in charge of the children's formal learning activities, she appears to be involved with them as a supporter and helper of their efforts.

7. Principal's Role

The principal of Classroom B closely resembles an administrator who is a "head teacher." He spends fifty per cent of his time teaching his own classes. However, the teacher in Classroom B does not feel that the principal is an effective leader. She wants him to provide more leadership in the school. In the teacher's words, "There is still a lack of common goals."

8. Parental Involvement and Support

Consistent with the model, parents generally support the teacher's efforts in Classroom B.

Parents are involved but not strongly. Most parents of the survey state that their main involvement consists of the parent-teacher conferences scheduled twice a year. Only one set of parents indicate that they have been involved in the classroom's actual operations.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

Unlike the expectations of the model, there was almost no prior preparation for Classroom B. The teacher states, "Everyone just began cold."

CLASSROOM C

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

The programmed instruction of Classroom C seems to contradict Rathbone's statement, "A child is an active, crucial agent in his own learning process—learning is the result of this self-initiated, individual interaction with the world he inhabits." Children have very little to say about their own learning process.

Children's activities in Classroom C are tightly structured. No real self-initiated involvement with the environment appears to exist. Teachers in Classroom C plan two week blocks of activities for their students, which occupy most of the children's time.

The subject areas—math, language arts, science, and social studies—are carefully organized into a series of performance objectives to be completed by the student. Children can move about the room and talk, but they are expected to work on their plans of study. Students have very little opportunity to "mess about." As one sixth grade girl states, "We must work on assigned stuff each day. We can't really do anything except work on our plans of study."

Classroom C's individual plans of study resemble the model in one respect: Rathbone asserts, "There is no set body of knowledge that has equal meaning for all children—each must absorb and accommodate to his environment at his own rate and in his own way." Even though the environment consists of tightly structured subject areas, teachers make an effort to adapt the curriculum to a child's individual capacities and interests. Since each teacher has only fifteen students, more individual attention for each child is possible.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

There seems to be little resemblance between Classroom C and Rathbone's description of subject area integration. Subjects are divided into separate areas, each with its own set of performance objectives. According to the master teacher, the staff in Classroom C does not make a conscious attempt to inter-relate subject areas. The principal states, "Teachers do not yet have the skill to relate subjects to each other." He adds, "I want to make sure that some subjects are not neglected because they are all blended together."

3. Multi-aged Grouping

Rathbone states, "A child's competence and self-confidence can grow when he is able to observe freely and reflect upon others' strengths and weaknesses." Although the master teacher feels that multi-aged grouping often benefits younger students, children seem to feel differently. Two fifth graders do not like to be mixed in with the sixth graders because the older children pick on them. One sixth grader resents the fifth graders because "they are always messing things up."

4. Competition

Rathbone's assertion that children have difficulty competing when each is engaged in a separate task only partially applies to Classroom C. Children sometimes seem to be comparing progress made on each others' plans of study. Many are similar enough so that children can compete. The master teacher asserts, "All the children are working on different things and they don't care where the others are."

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

Rathbone maintains, "A child does not fail if he is able to adjust to his errors rather than having the latter totalled up against him—." The master teacher feels that fear of failure is an insignificant factor in Classroom C. According to her, teachers work with children in small groups; each child can move at his own rate of speed, and does not feel the pressure of group standards.

6. Teacher's Role

Teachers in Classroom C differ from Rathbone's statement: "A teacher does not pass down certain facts, skills, or concepts to a student, but rather presents a lateral interchange between two persons of nearly equal status, one of whom may need something possessed by the other." Teachers are clearly in charge and do pass down mandated requirements in the subject areas. Children have little to say about what they will learn.

7. Principal's Role

A quotation from the model asserts, "There is no better way of commending one's leadership to the staff than by demonstrating skill in the classroom." There is little parallel between this statement and the role of the principal in Classroom C. He is not directly involved with the children. His appearances in the classroom are half-jokingly labeled by the master teacher as "snooping." The principal sees himself as "a motivator, a person responsible for guiding change." He and his teachers view him as a conceptualist, not an implementer.

8. Parental Involvement and Support

Unlike the model's expectations, parents do not whole-heartedly support the program in Classroom C. The principal states, "Not a single parent is one hundred per cent enthusiastic." When the classroom began, parents commonly called the program "a jungle." However, opposition has dwindled, and parents are now more supportive, partly because of the principal's vigorous efforts to communicate with the parents. The principal recently established a parents' advisory committee. He also communicates with the parents through coffee hours, newsletters, and the PTA.

Parents in the survey seem generally involved in the classroom's activities. For example, one is a choral director, another is a teacher's aide, and a third indicates that she was a para-professional in the classroom for one and one-half years.

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

Unlike the model, there was no real prior preparation for Classroom D. Teachers met two weeks before the opening of school, primarily to plan the operational details. The master teacher states, "It was very difficult. We learned as we went along. We did a lot of backtracking."

CLASSROOM D

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

Beyond choosing the group in which he wants to participate, a child in Classroom D has little freedom to "interact with almost any element in his environment." There are play periods twice a day, but these are brief. Most children seem to occupy this time running about the room. Play periods seem more like a recess than a serious opportunity to interact with the manipulative materials of the classroom. Commenting on children's freedom to "mess about" in the classroom, the teacher states, "I cannot see where kids can just decide for themselves what they want to do."

Toys, manipulative materials, and activities do not dominate the classroom. Interest areas exist, but teachers remove or add materials as they are to be used for that day. Except for basic items such as building blocks, the animals, and art easels, materials are not continuously present in the classroom.

The teacher indicates that children do not necessarily have to be involved with groups. "Children can just go into a corner and sit if they want to. There is a genuine freedom." However, the observer saw little evidence of individual children participating in anything but group activities.

2. Integration of Subject Areas

Rathbone says, "The idea of the curriculum being ordered and subject to neat subdivisions into 'disciplines' is rejected by proponents of open education." The activities in Classroom D are separated. Many are part of the pre-academic readiness areas. The teacher states, "Integration occurs in an informal way. We do not plan for it, but I suppose children do relate what they have learned in one area to other areas."

3. Multi-aged Grouping

Classroom D does not have multi-aged grouping.

4. Competition

Classroom D does not match Rathbone's description of competition in an open classroom. As expected in a group-oriented classroom, the teacher maintains that considerable competition exists. Although children are engaged in different tasks within the group, their efforts spring from a common project.

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

Classroom D seems consistent with Rathbone's statement, "A child does not fail if he is able to adjust to his errors rather than having the latter totalled up against him, either by the teacher or by his peers." The teacher indicates that he does not concentrate on mistakes but stresses the good aspects of a project. He finds no evidence of fear of failure impeding a child's progress.

6. Teacher's Role

Contrary to Rathbone's description, teachers in Classroom D pass down facts and skills in the form of mandated group activities. The teacher states that the classroom is definitely "teacher-oriented." The teachers prepare most of the materials and decide each day what activities will be scheduled that day.

In another sense, the teachers in Classroom D resemble Rathbone's description of an open classroom teacher. Teachers work with individual students within the group. A teacher at least partly seems to act as a "consultant, flexible resource, [and] psychologically supportive relator."

7. Principal's Role

Unlike the model's expectations, the principal of Classroom D is not directly involved in the classroom's activities. However, he seems to be a dominating administrator whose ideas on open education strongly influence Classroom D's program. He meets with the team periodically and presents his expectations to them. The principal has recently published a booklet which outlines what he expects from his teachers with regard to open education.

8. Parental Involvement and Support

The model indicates that support from the parents is an important element in the success of the open classroom. Parental support of Classroom D is mixed. The principal states that three groups of parents exist in the community: "The apathetic, the 'anti' forces, and the wholehearted supporters." He adds, "The supporters are more vocal than the 'anti' forces."

Unlike the model's expectations, parents do not seem to be actively involved in the classroom's operations. Only one parent in the survey was involved at all, and she indicated that she "was called upon to help."

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

The model predicts, "The success of open education depends upon the sorts of preparation and support engendered before the program is initiated." Virtually no preparation was made prior to the start of Classroom D. The principal asserts that neither he nor his staff had had any background in open education before implementing the program. He states that Classroom D evolved from a team-teaching, in-service course at the school. He says, "We just sort of slipped into the open classroom idea. I'm still not sure whether this is not just team-teaching."

CLASSROOM E

1. Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process

Classroom E seems generally consistent with Rathbone's description of a child as his own agent in the learning process. Children in Classroom E can participate in a variety of activities and materials. Although reading, language arts, and math are required daily, children can choose the rest of their subjects from a variety of interest areas. Classroom E itself is dominated by children's projects in science and social studies. Most students seem to be purposively occupied with some project or activity. Few children appear to be engaged in random or idle movement.

Consistent with the model, considerable independence is granted to the child, although each child is required to attend the interest areas he chooses. Rathbone states, "There is no set body of knowledge that has equal meaning for all children—each must absorb and accommodate to his environment at his own rate and in his own way." The teacher in Classroom E asserts that most of his work with students is "individualized, with children working at their own rate." The teacher adds, "In this setting you are not just throwing material at the students. Now I can work with individual students and have each one see how he really relates to the subject."

2. Integration of Subject Areas

Since different teachers are in charge of various interest areas around the building, one teacher cannot integrate all subject areas. Rathbone rejects the idea of "the curriculum being ordered and subject to neat subdivisions into 'disciplines.'"

The teacher explains that there is no concerted effort among teachers to integrate subject areas. He feels that any overlap is generally by accident.

3. Multi-aged Grouping

Consistent with the model, the teacher in Classroom E indicates that his students of different age levels interact very well together. He finds that more capable students are willing to help less able ones.

4. Competition

Classroom E seems to match Rathbone's description of competition: "A child finds difficulty competing when each is engaged in a different task." The teacher in Classroom E states, "Children measure against themselves rather than someone else. Everyone is doing a different thing anyway."

5. Attitudes Toward Failure

Classroom E seems consistent with Rathbone's description of failure in an open classroom. The teacher explains that children take errors in stride. He says, "Children learn that mistakes aren't bad in themselves." As Rathbone says, "A child does not fail if he is able to adjust to his errors—." The teacher states, "Children only get disturbed if I'm not available and they need help after they have gone wrong somewhere. They want to correct it, and get frustrated if they can't get on with the task."

6. Teacher's Role

The teacher in Classroom E resembles Rathbone's description of a teacher. The teacher seems to be a "flexible resource," a "psychologically supportive relator," a "general facilitator of the learning requirements of an independent agent," and "collaborator." Children ask his advice and seem to take it seriously. He does not seem to teach down to the children, but rather works with them as one person who is interested in their activities and has something to offer. He seems to relate to children much as he would relate to another adult: his manner is natural, friendly, and sympathetic. The teacher's attitude is partially revealed when he says, "Under this system I try harder because I am now much closer to each child. I can see each of their problems and their growth in detail and I just want to help them more." He states, "I know exactly what the needs of each child are and "I plan in terms of these needs."

7. Principal's Role

Contrary to the model, the principal of Classroom E does not work with the students in the classroom. The teacher says, "The principal is a facilitator. He makes sure that the program runs smoothly. He knows the teachers and most of the students very well but doesn't get into the classrooms."

8. Parental Involvement and Support

Consistent with the model, the teacher of Classroom E feels that most parents are very supportive of his program.

Parents in the survey vary in their participation. Two parents were not involved with the classroom at all. One parent is a "parent volunteer." Another is chairman of the "Parent Volunteer Committee."

9. Prior Preparation for the Open Classroom

As the model indicates, the success of open education depends partly upon the training and re-training of teachers and others to be involved. The teacher of Classroom E states that there was not much planning. A teacher committee met late in the year prior to the new program but, according to the teacher, they were concerned only with the "nuts and bolts of actual implementation."

Long range planning for the principal also meant the strategy and practical problems of implementation. Convincing the parents was a major part of the principal's prior efforts.

SECTION C

Comparison of Teacher Questionnaire Findings to Model

Preliminary Information

Twenty-three teachers responded. Eighteen teachers included in the questionnaire are women; five teachers are men. Eighteen teachers are permanently certified; four have provisional certification. One teacher did not identify his certification status.

Table 1 indicates the age range of the twenty-three teachers:

TABLE 1

Age Range	Number of Teachers
20-25	6
26-30	6
31-40	8
41-50	2
51-60	0
Over 60	1

Eleven teachers have a Bachelor's degree. Nine teachers have a Master's degree. One teacher has a Professional Diploma beyond the Master's degree. One teacher lists a high school diploma but nothing else. One did not respond to this question.

All twenty-three teachers claimed to have mixed ability grouping in their classrooms. Table 2 diagrams the grade level and number of students in each classroom. Twenty-two teachers responded to this item.

TABLE 2

Grade Level	Number of Children in Each Classroom
Nursery-First	(79)
Kindergarten	(36) (19)
Kindergarten-Second	(25)
First	(55, 2 teachers) (57, 2 teachers) (23) (21)
Second	(54, 2 teachers)
Second and Third	(48, 2 teachers) (133, 4 teachers, 2 aides)
Second-Sixth	(100, combined classes of 1 teacher)
Third	(51, 2 teachers) (29) (26)
Fourth	(28)
Fourth-Sixth	(120, combined classes of 1 teacher) (102)
Fifth	(24)
Fifth and Sixth	(112)
Sixth	(25)
Seventh	(110, 2 teachers)

Fourteen classrooms have a single grade level. Three classrooms combine two grades. Four classrooms contain three grades. One classroom combines grades two through six.

Six classrooms have two teachers working together. One classroom combines four teachers and two teacher's aides. Three other classrooms appear to have team-teaching because of the number of students, but do not supply enough information to confirm it.

Table 3 indicates the racial composition of the twenty-three schools:

TABLE 3

White (percentage)	Nonwhite (percentage)	Number of Schools
100	0	10
99.5	.5	1
98	2	4
96	4	2
95	5	2
90	10	2
80	20	1
70	30	1

Discussion of Statements

Table 4 presents the data pertinent to Category 1, "Student as His Own Agent in the Learning Process." The following relates individual statements to the model and lists the range, number, and mean of the responses. The mean of the responses is determined in the following way: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, strongly agree = 4.

Statement 4. Rathbone states that children's learning is idiosyncratic and "fundamentally individualistic." Each child must be left alone to find "structure and order in [his] individual and unique experience." Nineteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that many activities go on simultaneously in their classrooms. Three teachers agree and one disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.78.

Statement 24. Materials must be available to a child in an open classroom environment if he is to interact with them. Eighteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that materials are readily accessible to children in their classrooms. Five teachers agree. The mean of the responses is 3.78.

Statement 2. Rathbone states, "The individual child is capable of interacting with almost any element in his environment and learning something from it—." Nineteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that their students have equal access to the materials of their classrooms. Three agree and one strongly disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.73.

Statement 8. Rathbone asserts, "Learning is the result of [a child's] self-initiated, individual interaction with the world he inhabits." Sixteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that their students work individually and in small groups at various activities in their classrooms. Seven teachers agree. The mean of the responses is 3.70.

Statement 23. A child "messing about" in an open classroom works directly with manipulative materials. Fourteen of twenty-two teachers strongly agree that this statement describes their classrooms. Eight teachers agree. The mean of the responses is 3.64.

Statement 9. A large quantity of books is part of a rich and diverse open classroom environment. Sixteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that they supply a diversity and profusion of books in their classrooms. Five teachers agree and two disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.61.

Statement 50. Implicit in the model's description of an open classroom environment is a child's deep involvement with the activities he pursues. Fifteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that their students are deeply involved with the activities they pursue. Seven teachers agree. One disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.61.

Statement 39. According to the model, a child-oriented environment contains activities, products, and ideas created by the children. Seventeen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that this statement describes their classrooms. Three teachers agree and three disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.60.

Statement 42. Rathbone states that part of an open classroom environment involves a child's interaction with his peers. Fourteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that their students look at and discuss each other's work. Eight teachers agree. One disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.57.

Statement 19. Implicit in the model is the freedom of a child to use any material that will help bring "order out of the often tumultuous confusion found in one's surroundings." Eleven of twenty-three teachers agree that their classroom environment includes materials developed or supplied by the children. Nine teachers strongly agree. Three disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.26.

Statement 7. An essential characteristic of the model's description of an open classroom is that children select their own activities and follow their own routine. Twelve of twenty-three teachers agree that they help children determine their own routine. Eight teachers strongly agree and three disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.22.

Statement 14. Free movement is essential if children are to explore an open classroom environment. Eleven of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that children may use other areas of the building and school yard as part of their school time. Eight teachers agree, two disagree, and two strongly disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.22.

Statement 6. Rathbone states that the presence of manipulative materials is an important part of the open classroom environment. Ten of twenty-one teachers agree that manipulative materials are supplied in great diversity and range in their classrooms. Five teachers strongly agree and six disagree. The mean of the responses is 2.95.

Statement 15. Use of the neighborhood is an extension of Statement 14. Ten of twenty-three teachers agree that their students use the surrounding neighborhood. Six strongly agree. Six teachers disagree and one strongly disagrees. One teacher indicates that use of the neighborhood involves "resource people." Another teacher states that their neighborhood is "too spread out to use it." The mean of the responses is 2.91.

Statement 20. Related to Statement 7, the freedom of a child to schedule and plan his own activities is basic to the model. Ten of twenty-three teachers disagree that they plan and schedule the children's activities through the day. Five teachers strongly disagree, seven agree, and one strongly agrees. The mean of the responses is 2.17.

Statement 21. Rathbone states, "A child is an active, crucial agent in his own learning process—." Involvement with the environment is self-initiated and not externally mandated. Eleven of twenty-three teachers disagree that they make sure children use materials only as instructed. Ten teachers strongly disagree. Two strongly agree. The mean of the responses is 1.74.

Statement 11. Rathbone indicates that children can move freely about in an open classroom environment. Thirteen of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree with the statement that children must see the teacher from their desks. Six teachers disagree. Two teachers agree and two strongly agree. Several teachers commented that their students have no desks. The mean of the responses is 1.70.

Statement 17. Children must converse in order to discuss the environment with their peers and with the teacher. Twelve of twenty-two teachers strongly disagree with the statement that they prefer that children not talk. Seven teachers disagree, two agree, and one strongly agrees. The mean of the responses is 1.64.

Statement 3. Statement 3 complements Statement 24. Thirteen of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree that they keep materials out of the way until they are used or distributed under the teacher's direction. Eight teachers disagree and two agree. The mean of the responses is 1.52.

Statement 10

A basic tenet of the model is the independence and freedom of movement granted to a child. Teachers are almost unanimous in strongly disagreeing that children are not supposed to move about the room without asking permission. Twenty-one of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree. Two disagree. The mean of the responses is 1.09.

TABLE 4

CATEGORY 1 FINDINGS FROM TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Statements		Range of Responses				Number	Mea
		strongly disagree	dis- agree	agree	strongly agree		
4.	Many activities go on simultaneously	0	1	3	19	23	3.78
24.	Materials are readily accessible to children	0	0	5	18	23	3.78
2.	Each child has a space for his personal storage and the major part of the classroom is organized for common use	1	0	3	19	23	3.73
8.	Children work individually and in small groups at various activities	0	0	7	16	23	3.70
23.	Children work directly with manipulative materials	0	0	8	14	22	3.64
9.	Books are supplied in diversity and profusion (including reference books, children's literature)	0	2	5	16	23	3.61
50.	Children are deeply involved in what they are doing through the day	0	1	7	15	23	3.61
39.	Children's activities, products, and ideas are reflected abundantly about the classroom	0	3	3	17	23	3.60
42.	The children spontaneously look at and discuss each other's work	0	1	8	14	23	3.57

TABLE 4 (cont.)

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	strongly agree		
19. The environment includes materials developed or supplied by the children	0	3	11	9	23	3.26
7. The day is divided into large blocks of time within which children, with my help, determine their own routine	0	3	12	8	23	3.22
14. Children may voluntarily use other areas of the building and school yard as part of their school time	2	2	8	11	23	3.22
6. Manipulative materials are supplied in great diversity and range, with little replication	0	6	10	5	21	2.95
15. Our program includes use of the neighborhood	1	6	10	6	23	2.91
20. I plan and schedule the children's activities through the day	5	10	7	1	23	2.17
21. I make sure children use materials only as instructed	10	11	0	2	23	1.74
11. Desks are arranged so that every child can see the blackboard or teacher from his desk	13	6	2	2	23	1.70
17. I prefer that children not talk when they are supposed to be working	12	7	2	1	22	1.64

TABLE 4 (cont.)

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	strongly agree		
3. Materials are kept out of the way until they are distributed or used under my direction	13	8	2	0	23	1.52
10. Children are not supposed to move about the room without asking permission	21	2	0	0	23	1.09

Table 5 presents the data pertinent to Category 2, "Integration of Subject Areas." The following relates individual statements to the model and lists the range, number, and mean of the responses. The mean of the responses is determined in the following way: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, strongly agree = 4.

Statement 13. Two teachers indicated that they did not understand the statement. Four teachers did not answer the statement.

The statement relates to a student's use of materials beyond the immediate classroom. Flowers from a nearby field or old bottles and household utensils are common environmental materials. The statement applies to Category 2 because it implies an expansion of materials that can be used in the classroom environment. Nine of nineteen teachers strongly agree that common environmental materials are provided. Nine teachers agree and one disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.42.

Statement 37. Rathbone states, "The class lesson, in effect, narrows the possible kinds of response that an individual can make."

Thirteen of twenty-one teachers agree that their class operates within clear guidelines. Five teachers strongly agree, two disagree, and one strongly disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.05.

Statement 16. As in Statement 13, an expanded version of subject matter boundaries is implied in Statement 16. Ten of twenty-three teachers agree that children use "books" written by their classmates. Five teachers strongly agree, six teachers disagree, and two strongly disagree. One teacher states that children use "materials" made by their classmates, not "books." The mean of the responses is 2.78.

Statement 31. Dividing the curriculum into subject matter areas is directly contradictory to the model. Ten teachers agree that the work children do is divided into subject matter areas. Four teachers strongly agree. Five teachers disagree and three strongly disagree. The mean of the responses is 2.57.

Statement 34. Curriculum guides or textbooks for a particular grade level imply a common structuring of children's activities. Rathbone rejects this characteristic. In his view, "The class lesson makes its assumptions and determinations in terms of the class as a whole, and seldom on the basis of a child's individual needs." Six teachers agree that they base their instruction on grade-level curriculum guides and textbooks. Three strongly agree. Seven teachers disagree and seven strongly disagree. One teacher says, "The content but not the approach" is structured. The mean of the responses is 2.22.

Statement 1. Common sets of texts and materials imply an environment where students are taught as a class. Rathbone rejects the class lesson. Ten of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree that they use common sets of texts and materials. Seven teachers disagree, three agree, and three strongly agree. The mean of the responses is 1.96.

Statement 32. As in Statements 1 and 37, Rathbone asserts that open education rejects the "class lesson as something prepared in advance and pitched at some imaginary mean." Eighteen of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree that lessons are given to their classes as a whole. Two teachers disagree and three agree. The mean of the responses is 1.35.

TABLE 5

CATEGORY 2 FINDINGS FROM TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Statements		Range of Responses				Number	Mean
		strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	strongly agree		
13.	Common environmental materials are provided	0	1	9	9	19	3.42
37.	The class operates within clear guidelines made explicit	1	2	13	5	21	3.05
16.	Children use "books" written by their classmates as part of their reading and reference materials	2	6	10	5	23	2.78
31.	The work children do is divided into subject matter areas	3	5	10	4	23	2.57
34.	I base my instruction on curriculum guides or the textbooks for the grade level I teach	7	7	6	3	23	2.22
1.	Texts and materials are supplied in class sets so that all children may have their own	10	7	3	3	23	1.96
32.	My lessons and assignments are given to the class as a whole	18	2	3	0	23	1.35

Table 6 presents the data pertinent to Category 3, "Psychological Climate." The following relates individual statements to the model and lists the range, number, and mean of the responses. The mean of the responses is determined in the following way: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, strongly agree = 4.

Statement 30. A basic tenet of the model describes a climate where a child can develop in Rathbone's words his "self-respect and self-esteem." Sixteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that the climate of their classrooms is warm and accepting. Seven teachers agree. One teacher comments, "We hope!" The mean of the responses is 3.70.

Statement 22. Rathbone states, "Multi-aged grouping leads to a corresponding variety of ability and talent which in turn offers a greater possibility for seeing oneself in a variety of perspectives." By implication, ability grouping reduces a child's exposure to a variety of ability and talent. Eleven teachers strongly agree that they group children for lessons directed at specific needs. Eleven teachers agree and one teacher disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.43.

Statement 18. Statement 18 is consistent with Rathbone's description of an open classroom: the existence of flexible peer interaction. Twelve teachers agree that children voluntarily group and regroup themselves. Seven teachers strongly agree, three teachers disagree, and one strongly disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.09.

Statement 36. Children remaining in a "family group" for two or more years is consistent with multi-aged grouping. Nine of twenty-two teachers strongly agree that they have children for just one year. Four teachers agree, five disagree, and four strongly disagree. The mean of the responses is 2.82.

Statement 26. Again, grouping children according to specific subjects is anathema to the model. Thirteen of twenty-three teachers disagree that they use test results to group children in reading and/or math. Four teachers strongly disagree, five agree, and one strongly agrees. The mean of the responses is 2.13.

Statement 5. The idea that children of different age levels should work together is a basic tenet of the model. Fifteen teachers strongly disagree that children are expected to do their own work without getting help from other children. Four teachers disagree, three agree, and one strongly agrees. The mean of the responses is 1.57.

Statement 43. Rathbone states, "There is a deemphasis of competition among peers—a child finds difficulty competing when each is engaged in a different task." Fourteen of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree that they use tests to evaluate children and rate them in comparison to their peers. Six teachers disagree and three agree. One teacher says, "The school system tests them to death. I use them along with much other data." The mean of the responses is 1.52.

TABLE 6

CATEGORY 3 FINDINGS FROM TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	strongly agree		
30. The emotional climate is warm and accepting	0	0	7	16	23	3.70
22. I group children for lessons directed at specific needs	0	1	11	11	23	3.43

TABLE 6 (cont.)

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	strongly agree		
18. Children voluntarily group and regroup themselves	1	3	12	7	23	3.09
36. I have children for just one year	4	5	4	9	22	2.82
26. I use test results to group children in reading and/or math	4	13	5	1	23	2.13
5. Children are expected to do their own work without getting help from other children	15	4	3	1	23	1.57
43. I use tests to evaluate children and rate them in comparison to their peers	14	6	3	0	23	1.52

Table 7 presents the data pertinent to Category 4, "Teacher's Role." The following relates individual statements to the model and lists the range, number, and mean of the responses. The mean of the responses is determined in the following way: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, strongly agree = 4.

Statement 25. Rathbone states that to teach means "to facilitate learning by surrounding the child, and helping him into situations where learning can take place." Nineteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that they promote a purposeful atmosphere by helping children use time productively, and by valuing their work and learning. Four teachers agree. The mean of the responses is 3.83.

Statement 46. The open classroom enables teachers to interact more freely with each other as well as with students. Seventeen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that they have helpful colleagues with whom they can discuss ideas. Five teachers agree and one disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.70.

Statement 12. Rathbone states that one of the roles of an open classroom teacher is a "presenter of environments." Sixteen of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that the environment includes materials they have developed. Five teachers agree and two disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.61.

Statement 47. Part of Rathbone's definition of a teacher is his role as "diagnostician of individual needs." Twelve of twenty-three teachers strongly agree that they keep a collection of each child's work for use in evaluating his development. Nine teachers agree and two disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.43.

Statement 48. Closely related to Statement 47, ten of twenty-two teachers strongly agree that they use evaluation to guide their instruction and provisioning for the classroom. Eleven teachers agree and one disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.41.

Statement 33. Related to Statements 47 and 48, teachers in an open classroom observe the specific work or concern of a child to obtain diagnostic information. Twelve of twenty-three teachers agree that this statement reflects their actions in the classroom. Nine teachers strongly agree and two disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.30.

Statement 44. Teachers in an open classroom often use the services of teacher's aides, para-professionals, parents, and other teachers.

Nine of twenty-one teachers agree that they use the assistance of someone in a supportive advisory capacity. Eight teachers strongly agree, three disagree, and one strongly disagrees. The mean of the responses is 3.14.

Statement 41. The teacher as a "diagnostician of individual needs" in the extension or redirection of a child's activity is part of Rathbone's definition of a teacher. Twelve of twenty-three teachers agree with this statement of their role. Seven teachers strongly agree and four disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.13.

Statement 28. Rathbone asserts that part of the role of a teacher is a "general facilitator of the learning requirements of an independent agent." Sixteen of twenty-three teachers agree that they base their instruction on each individual child and his interaction with materials and equipment. Five teachers strongly agree. Two disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.13.

Statement 35. Part of a teacher's role as diagnostician of individual needs is his role as "a trained observer." Eleven of twenty-three teachers agree that they keep notes on a child's intellectual, emotional, and physical development. Six teachers strongly agree, five disagree, and one strongly disagrees. One teacher comments, "Should be doing even more than I am!" Another says, "But have trouble keeping it up—so it's not too successful." The mean of the responses is 2.96.

Statement 38. Dealing with the problems of each child as they arise is one measure of a teacher as a "psychologically supportive relator." Twelve of twenty-one teachers agree that they deal with conflicts and disruptive behavior without involving the group. Three teachers strongly agree, four disagree, and two strongly disagree. One teacher states, "Depends on situation and definition of 'the group!'" Another asserts, "It depends on the conflict, whether it is a group problem or concern." The mean of the responses is 2.76.

Statement 27. Rathbone states, "A teacher does not present answers or, indeed, always well-articulated questions. He is to offer, instead, opportunities around which a child can formulate his own questions and from which he can derive his own satisfactory answers." Fourteen of twenty-two teachers disagree that children expect them to correct all their work. One strongly disagrees, four agree, and three strongly agree. One teacher explains, "They correct it and then I review or comment on work." Another states, "They can correct certain work given teacher's editions." A third teacher indicates that "a friend" can correct a child's work. The mean of the responses is 2.41.

Statement 40. Rathbone states that teachers work with and support students' efforts rather than being in charge of their activities. Ten of twenty-three teachers agree that they are in charge. One teacher strongly agrees, nine disagree, and three strongly disagree. The mean of the responses is 2.35.

Statement 29. Rathbone indicates that a teacher is a collaborator and a trained observer. By implication, a teacher's observation of a child's interaction with the environment will provide as much if not more diagnostic information than a formalized test will. Twelve of twenty-two teachers disagree that they give children tests to find out what they know. Three teachers strongly disagree and seven agree. The mean of the responses is 2.18.

Statement 49. As already seen, Rathbone's total definition of a teacher includes far more than academic achievement. He states that the teacher in an open classroom is

> a trained observer, diagnostician of individual needs, presenter of environments, consultant, flexible resource, psychologically supportive relator, general facilitator of the learning requirements of an independent agent, and collaborator.

Thirteen of twenty-three teachers disagree that academic achievement is their top priority for the children. Five teachers strongly disagree, four agree, and one strongly agrees. The mean of the responses is 2.04.

Statement 45. Rathbone states, "A teacher does not pass down certain facts, skills, or concepts to a student, but rather presents a lateral interchange between two persons of nearly equal status—." Eleven of twenty-three teachers strongly disagree that they keep children in their sight so that they can be sure they are doing what they are supposed to do. Nine teachers disagree, and three agree. The mean of the responses is 1.65.

TABLE 7

CATEGORY 4 FINDINGS FROM TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree		
25. I promote a purposeful atmosphere by expecting and enabling children to use time productively and to value their work and learning	0	0	4	19	23	3.83
46. I have helpful colleagues with whom I discuss teaching ideas	0	1	5	17	23	3.70
12. The environment includes materials I have developed	0	2	5	16	23	3.61

TABLE 7 (cont.)

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree		
47. I keep a collection of each child's work for use in evaluating his development	0	2	9	12	23	3.43
48. Evaluation provides information to guide my instruction and provisioning for the classroom	0	1	11	10	22	3.41
33. To obtain diagnostic information, I observe the specific work or concern of a child closely and ask immediate, experience-based questions	0	2	12	9	23	3.30
44. I use the assistance of someone in a supportive advisory capacity	1	3	9	8	21	3.14
41. Before suggesting any extension or redirection of activity, I give diagnostic attention to the particular child and his particular activity	0	4	12	7	23	3.13
28. I base my instruction on each individual child and his interaction with materials and equipment	0	2	16	5	23	3.13
35. I keep notes and write individual histories of each child's intellectual, emotional, and physical development	1	5	11	6	23	2.96
38. I take care of dealing with conflicts and disruptive behavior without involving the group	2	4	12	3	21	2.76

TABLE 7 (cont.)

Statements	Range of Responses				Number	Mean
	strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	strongly agree		
27. Children expect me to correct all their work	1	14	4	3	22	2.41
40. I am in charge	3	9	10	1	23	2.35
29. I give children tests to find out what they know	3	12	7	0	22	2.18
49. Academic achievement is my top priority for the children	5	13	4	1	23	2.04
45. I try to keep all children within my sight so that I can be sure they are doing what they are supposed to do	11	9	3	0	23	1.65

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

I. The following conclusions seem appropriate regarding the individual categories of the model as they relate to the five classrooms:

1. All classrooms provide at least some form of individualized instruction. However, the classrooms offer different interpretations of a student as his own agent in the learning process.

Classroom A strongly resembles Category 1. True freedom seems to exist for students to interact on an individual basis with a large variety of materials and activities in the environment. A similar opportunity exists for the children in Classroom E. However, children in Classroom E are not as free to examine the environment, even though they choose their own interest areas. All subjects in Classroom E are individualized, but children are required to study reading, language arts, and math. The teacher determines what will be covered in these basic subjects.

Considerable freedom for students also exists in Classroom B, yet this classroom lacks the variety of manipulative materials found in Classrooms A and E. Also, children in Classroom B seem to be engaged in more random and superficial involvement with the environment. Instruction is individualized in Classroom B, but children are required to study reading, language arts, and math.

Classroom C offers programmed instruction on an individualized basis. However, the curriculum is highly structured and organized. The potential for self-initiated, individual interaction with the environment hardly seems to exist.

The teachers of Classroom D place heavy emphasis on group organization and participation. Although children receive individual attention within the groups, teachers plan and structure the group activities. Children may choose the group in which they want to participate, but teachers can channel children into a particular group if the teacher feels he needs the activity. There seems to be little interaction with the environment outside of planned group activities.

2. Integration of subject areas does not seem to be a strong characteristic of the five classrooms. Few teachers consciously plan for integration of subject areas. Many describe integration as occurring for a student by chance. At least math, reading, and language arts are treated as separate subjects in all classrooms except Classroom A. Only the teacher in Classroom A describes specific instances where she consciously plans for subject area integration. However, even in her classroom, a rather precise division marks off separate interest areas.

3. Multi-aged grouping is present in three of the classrooms. The teachers are enthusiastic about it. As Rathbone predicts, most teachers cite the role-model older children provide younger ones. In most cases, teachers state that older or more capable children are willing to help younger or less capable ones.

4. The nature of competition is divided: teachers in the classrooms

that do not emphasize group instruction seem consistent with Rathbone, and indicate a general lack of competition. These classrooms include A, C, and E.

Classroom B cites the presence of competition. Although similar in structure to Classroom E, Classroom B follows a more uniform group presentation. Most children in Classroom B study from common workbook or textbook sequences, even though the teacher works with them individually. The teacher in Classroom D also indicates the presence of competition. Again, children in this classroom have a more pronounced, common group focus.

5. Attitudes toward failure in the five schools seem consistent with the model. Most teachers state that children treat failure as a natural occurrence rather than as a threat. Many children seem to treat failure as the need to continue work on an uncompleted task.

6. The teacher's role varies considerably in the five classrooms. The teacher in Classroom A appears to resemble the model closely. She works with the children most of the time and seems to offer sympathetic support for her students' efforts. She is a presenter and organizer of the classroom environment but does not seem to be a dominating or obtrusive force in the classroom.

The teacher in Classroom E resembles the teacher in Classroom A. He is a supporter of his students' efforts and a collaborator with them. He seems to be a flexible resource person whose advice the children take seriously. He does not seem to teach down to the children but works with them. His manner seems natural, friendly, and sympathetic.

The teacher in Classroom B appears to be trying to individualize the instruction, but unlike the teachers in Classrooms A and E she does not seem to be a "presenter of environments." She spends little time preparing each day, and works in a sequential pattern from the workbooks and textbooks of the classroom. Classroom B seems to offer two extremes: unbridled freedom for children when they are not with the teacher, and controlled but individualized presentation of subject areas within the teacher-directed groups.

Teachers in Classroom C seem to be in tight control. The subjects are precisely defined by the teachers, but are presented to students on an individualized, programmed basis. The students in Classroom C seem to be monitored and controlled in their pursuit of subject areas. The students reflect this observation. Most indicate that they have little time for anything except their individual plans of study.

Teachers in Classroom D attempt to individualize the instruction within the groups. However, children appear to have little opportunity for self-initiated, individual interaction with their environment. The teachers in Classroom D pass down facts and skills in the form of mandated group activities. The teachers prepare most of the materials and decide each day what activities will be scheduled that day.

7. Most principals do not seem to match the model's description of a principal's role. The principals of Classrooms C, D, and E are not directly involved with the classroom programs. The principal of Classroom C seems to be mainly a conceptualist rather than an implementer. The idea for an open classroom was originally his, but all successive planning and implementation were carried out by the teachers. The

principal seems to remain rather distant from the classroom's instructional program.

The principal of Classroom D maintains tight control over the teachers and the program. He recently published a school-wide booklet which outlines what he expects from his teachers with regard to open education. He is not actively involved with the children of Classroom D.

Although the principal of Classroom E is similarly detached from actual classroom involvement, he seems to be more a supporter than a director of the teacher's efforts. Unlike the principal of Classroom D, he does not issue directives to his teachers about the program. The principal of Classroom E indicates that he is primarily a facilitator who makes sure the program runs smoothly.

The principal of Classroom B is the only administrator who does any teaching. In this sense, he comes closest to the model's description of the principal's role. However, the teacher in Classroom B feels that he is not a focal point for the staff, and that he does not offer enough leadership for the staff. The teacher seems to object to his role as "just another teacher."

Of the five classrooms, the supervisor of Classroom A appears to be the most sympathetic to the teacher's efforts, and the most supportive. Although she is not directly involved in classroom instruction, she seems to fulfill partially the model's description of an administrator sensitive to and supportive of the teaching efforts of an open classroom teacher.

8. Except for Classroom A, parental involvement and support is not striking. In most classrooms the parents at least tacitly support the program. In Classrooms B and E, parents could choose whether or not to

send their children. According to the teacher and the results of the parent questionnaires, more support is present in these schools.

The parents of Classroom C were at first hostile to the open classroom and still seem to be the least supportive. However, the principal seems to be communicating effectively with the parents, and initial opposition has decreased.

Parental support of Classroom D is mixed. A number of parents commented about aspects of the program they did not like. However, the principal states that the supporters are more vocal than are the parents who oppose.

According to the teacher of Classroom A, parents are strongly supportive, and enthusiastic about the program.

Parents seem least involved with Classroom D. Only one parent specified any participation, and she was asked.

Parents in Classrooms C and E seem actively involved with the classroom's program. Three parents of the sample indicate that they served as teacher's aides, para-professionals, and parent volunteers.

Only one set of parents described any sort of involvement with Classroom B. They had shown slides of their trip to Taiwan.

The parents of Classroom A are heavily involved with the classroom's operations. Parents are present when children are evaluated. A kit is sent home to all parents containing suggestions for reinforcing basic skills their children are learning in the classroom. Parents are also asked to work with children in the classroom.

9. Except for Classroom A, there was little prior preparation for the new approach. Most teachers indicate that a workshop or teacher committee

was held two or three weeks before the start of school. Often these meetings seemed to involve the details of immediate implementation rather than an examination of the tenets or concepts of open education. Most teachers and some principals state that they jumped into the program, and then adjusted as it evolved. In Classrooms B and C teachers indicated considerable backtracking and modification.

In Classroom D the innovation began as team-teaching and gradually turned into open education. The principal of Classroom D states that the program may still be only a version of team-teaching.

Both the teacher and supervisor of Classroom A had been involved in an early childhood education program already in existence in the district. According to the supervisor, open education seems to be a natural extension of many of the established tenets of early childhood educational theory. There was no other preparation for Classroom A.

II. The following conclusions can be made regarding the individual categories of the model as they relate to the supplementary data of the teacher questionnaires:

1. The mean of the total responses for Category 1 is 2.92. The mean includes Statements 20, 21, 11, 17, 3, and 10 which are worded contrary to the expectations of the model.

Teachers by and large strongly agree with the statements in Category 1. Two of the strongest statements are 4 and 24. Basic to the model is the presence of many activities that go on simultaneously in an open classroom. Equally basic is the accessibility of materials to the children. The mean of both these statements is 3.78. Only one teacher disagrees with either assertion.

Related to the accessibility of materials is the diversity and profusion of books present in an open classroom. The mean of Statement 9 is also strong at 3.61.

The organization of the room for common use, and the direct and individual involvement of children with manipulative materials are also fundamental postulates of the model. Again, the mean of Statements 2, 8, and 23 ranges from 3.73 to 3.64. Only one teacher strongly disagrees with any of the three statements. That teacher indicates that his classroom is not organized for common use.

Statement 50 involves a teacher's value judgment. The mean is 3.61 with only one teacher disagreeing.

Statements 39, 42, and 19 all involve children's participation and involvement with the environment of the classroom. The mean remains over 3.00 for the three statements.

Statements 14 and 15 involve the students' use of areas other than the classroom. Eleven teachers strongly agree with Statement 14 that students may use other areas of the building. The mean is 3.22. Use of the neighborhood in Statement 15 is not as strong. The mean is 2.91.

It is interesting to contrast Statement 6 with Statement 23. While a strong response specifies that children work directly with manipulative materials, a mean of only 2.95 is registered for Statement 6, "Manipulative materials are supplied in great diversity and range, with little replication."

As expected, the last six statements have lower means. Statement 20 specifies, "I plan and schedule the children's activities through the day." The mean is 2.17. The statement contrasts with Statement 7 which asserts that teachers help students determine their own routine. More consistent with the model, the mean of Statement 7 is 3.22.

Statements 21, 11, 17, and 10 involve the limitations placed upon a student's freedom to move about the classroom. Teachers by and large disagree with the statements, "I make sure children use materials only as instructed," "Desks are arranged so that every child can see the blackboard or teacher from his desk," "I prefer that children not talk when they are supposed to be working," and "Children are not supposed to move about the room without asking permission." The mean of the four statements are respectively 1.74, 1.70, 1.64, and 1.09.

Statement 3 contrasts with Statement 24. Respectively, the means are 1.52 and 3.78. Most teachers disagree or strongly disagree with Statement 3 that "Materials are kept out of the way until they are distributed or used under my direction."

2. The mean of the total responses for Category 2 is 2.48. The mean includes Statements 31, 34, 1, and 32, which are worded contrary to the expectations of the model.

Teachers are in strongest agreement with Statement 13 which implies the expansion of the curriculum beyond textbooks and workbooks in subject matter areas. Rathbone rejects a curriculum which is "ordered and subject to neat subdivisions into 'disciplines.'" The mean of Statement 13 is 3.42.

Statements 37 and 31 involve the division of the classroom into defined subject matter areas. A majority of teachers agree with Statement 37 that the class operates under clear guidelines. Rathbone states, "Open education rejects the class lesson as something prepared in advance and pitched at some imaginary mean. The mean of 3.05 for Statement 37 appears inconsistent with the model. Teachers are more consistent in their partial rejection of Statement 31, "The work children do is divided into subject matter areas." The mean is 2.57.

Statements 16, 34, and 1 refer to the children's use of books and materials. Again, Rathbone rejects a rigid channeling of books and materials into subject matter areas. Children's use of books written by their classmates received a mean of 2.78. Statements 34 and 1 are more consistent with the model. A majority of teachers disagree that "I base my instruction on curriculum guides or the textbooks for the grade level I teach," and "Texts and materials are supplied in class sets so that all children may have their own. The mean of the two statements are respectively 2.22 and 1.96.

Most teachers strongly disagree with Statement 32, "My lessons and assignments are given to the class as a whole." The mean is 1.35. Rejection of the statement leads to Rathbone's assertion that "the class lesson—narrows the possible kinds of response that an individual can make."

3. The mean of the total responses for Category 3 is 2.61. The mean includes Statements 22, 36, 26, 5, and 43, which are worded contrary to the expectations of the model.

Statement 30 is a value judgment that involves an accepting atmosphere in the classroom. Consistent with the model, the mean is 3.70.

Statements 22, 18, 36, 26, and 5 refer to the grouping of students. The model states, "Multi-aged or vertical grouping leads to a corresponding variety of ability and talent which in turn offers a greater possibility for seeing oneself in a variety of perspectives." Homogeneous grouping is inconsistent with the model. Teachers generally agree with Statement 22 that they "group children for lessons directed at specific needs." The mean of 3.43 for this statement seems inconsistent with the model. More teachers disagree with the specific Statement 26, "I use test results to group children in reading and/or math." The lower mean of 2.13 is closer to the model's expectations.

Statement 36, "Having children for just one year" is also inconsistent with the idea of multi-aged grouping. The mean is 2.82. The voluntary grouping and regrouping of students is more consistent with the model. The mean of Statement 18 is 3.09.

The benefits of multi-aged grouping are manifested in Statement 5, "Children are expected to do their own work without getting help from other children." Consistent with the model, teachers strongly reject the statement. The mean is 1.57.

Statement 43 implies the presence of competition. In an open classroom Rathbone states, "There is a deemphasis of competition among peers—a child finds difficulty competing when each is engaged in a different task." Teachers strongly reject the statement, "I use tests to evaluate children and rate them in comparison to their peers." The mean is 1.52.

4. The mean of the total responses for Category 4 is 2.94. The mean includes Statements 27, 40, 29, 49, and 45, which are worded contrary to the expectations of the model.

Although basic to the model's description of an open classroom teacher, Statement 25 is difficult to assess. Nineteen teachers strongly agree that they promote a purposeful atmosphere by enabling children to use their time productively and to value their work and learning. The mean is 3.83.

Closely related to a purposeful atmosphere are the activities an open classroom teacher develops and promotes. Teacher-developed materials are part of Rathbone's description of a teacher as a "presenter of environments." The mean of Statement 12 is a strong 3.61. Related to the teacher's development of materials is Statement 28 which asserts, "I base my instruction on each individual child and his interaction with materials and equipment." The mean is 3.13.

Statements 38, 27, 40, 49, and 45 examine other basic tenets of the role of an open classroom teacher. Dealing with conflicts on an individual basis is consistent with Rathbone's description of a teacher as a psychologically supportive relator. The mean for Statement 38 is 2.76.

Statements 27 and 40 illuminate the extent to which a teacher sees himself in charge. The model describes the teacher as a collaborator with the children. By implication, a child will often be engaged in activities that do not require a teacher's corrections. Almost two-thirds of the teachers disagree with Statement 27, "Children expect me to correct all their work." The mean is 2.41. Statement 40 directly asserts, "I am in charge." The mean is 2.35. The mean is almost identical to Statement 27, but the range of responses differ. Ten of twenty-three teachers agree with Statement 40 that they are in charge. However, fourteen of twenty-two teachers disagree with Statement 27 that children expect them to correct their work.

Statements 49 and 45 are consistent with Rathbone's description of a teacher. The statements involve academic achievement as a primary goal and the constant surveillance of children. Thirteen teachers disagree with Statement 49 that academic achievement is their top priority. The mean is 2.04. Eleven teachers strongly disagree with Statement 45 that they try to keep all children within their sight so they can monitor their activities. The mean is 1.65.

A number of statements describe a teacher's methods of diagnosis and evaluation. Statement 47 describes the collection of children's work for use in evaluating his development. The mean is high at 3.43. Closely related to Statement 47 is Statement 33 which describes the methods of collecting diagnostic information. The mean is similarly strong at 3.30.

Using evaluation to guide a teacher's instruction and provisioning of the classroom defines Statement 48. Eleven of twenty-two teachers agree, and ten strongly agree with the statement. The mean is 3.41. Closely related to Statement 48 is Statement 41 which asserts, "Before suggesting any extension or redirection of activity, I give diagnostic attention to the particular child and his particular activity. Again, a majority of teachers either agree or strongly agree with the statement. The mean is 3.13.

One method of evaluation is summarized in Statement 35. Eleven teachers agree and six strongly agree that they "keep notes and write individual histories of each child's intellectual, emotional, and physical development." The mean is 2.96.

The model does not include the administration of tests as a method of evaluation. Twelve of twenty-two teachers disagree with Statement 29 that they give tests. The mean is 2.18.

Working with other teachers and receiving support from teacher's aides, para-professionals, and other supportive personnel are often part of an open classroom. Seventeen teachers strongly agree with Statement 46 that they have helpful colleagues with whom they can discuss ideas. The mean of Statement 46 is 3.70. Although not as high, nine teachers agree with Statement 44 that they use the assistance of someone in a supportive advisory capacity. Eight strongly agree. The mean for Statement 44 is 3.14.

III. Although the classroom descriptions and the teacher questionnaire findings are not strictly parallel, the following characteristics seem to describe most classrooms of the two samples:

1. Many activities go on simultaneously.

2. The classrooms are organized so that everything in the room is accessible to all children.

3. Children work individually, or in small groups at various activities.

4. Children are usually not required to sit at desks, and can move about the classrooms.

5. Students can talk without permission.

6. Lessons and assignments are not given to the class as a whole.

7. Test results are not used exclusively to find out what children know.

8. Most children can work with and get help from other children

in the classroom.

9. Teachers generally have helpful colleagues with whom they can discuss ideas.

10. Teachers give diagnostic attention to a child and his particular activities before incorporating any extension or redirection of activities.

11. Most teachers use the assistance of teacher's aides, student-teachers, or parent volunteers.

Recommendations

Teachers seem to need more training and re-training before implementing an open classroom. Such training was practically non-existent in the five classrooms visited. Many teachers describe wasted time and effort because they were not prepared for the open classroom. As the model suggests, extensive pre-service or in-service preparation is desirable before an open classroom is attempted.

The principal's role in an American open classroom can be better defined. A strong, effective, and productive relationship between teacher and supervisor seemed to exist in only one classroom visited.

Evaluative proof that open education is at least as productive as more traditional classrooms seems desirable. Many parents of the classrooms visited seem concerned that their children will be deficient in the basic skills of math, reading, and language arts because they are participating in an open classroom. As the Educational Testing Service asserts, proper measurement and evaluation of open classroom results can furnish evidence as to strengths and weaknesses of open education. ETS adds that such measurement is necessary to the proper development of open education.[143]

Replications of aspects of this study will further illuminate the practices of open classrooms. Using the Rathbone model as a base is but one approach. A descriptive examination which concentrates on the teacher's role is a primary recommendation. Rathbone,[144] Barth,[145] and Featherstone[146] all see the teacher's role in an open classroom as crucial. The Educational Testing Service,[147] and Walberg and Thomas[148] have provided theoretical constructs which focus on the teacher's attitudes, his manner of ordering and presenting the environment, and the way he supports students' efforts in an open classroom. Possibly valuable descriptive data can be gained by incorporating such studies into a further examination of the practices of open classroom teachers.

Finally, the application of open education to higher grade levels is plausible and possibly beneficial. The "school without walls," the neighborhood or "store-front schools," and the "free schools" are related concepts that often apply to older children. Studies which define a continuum from lower to higher grades, and which use the best of all these efforts could provide sound and productive long range educational programs.

FOOTNOTES

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APPENDIX A

OPEN CLASSROOM PROJECT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Name and Address of School	Contact Person	Phone Number
Cortland Campus School SUC at Cortland Cortland, N.Y. 13045	Thomas Toomey, Principal	607: 753-4704
Dansville Dansville Primary School Main Street Dansville, New York	William Brown, Principal	716:987-3151
Huntington Manor Plains Elem. School 330 Cuba Hill Road Elwood Public Schools Huntington, N. Y. 11743	Michael Thomas, Principal	516: AN 6-1240
Ithaca Ithaca City School District 400 Lake Street Ithaca, New York	Mrs. Ann Gunning	607: 274-2114
New Rochelle New Rochelle Public Schools 515 North Avenue New Rochelle, New York	Miss Jennie Andrea, Director	632-9000 Ext. 372
Syracuse Sumner School 211 Bassett Street Syracuse, N.Y. 13210	Mrs. Lillian Feldman Miss Margaret Bly Mrs. Jane Trembley	474-6031 472-3974 or 474-6031

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Niskayuna Public Schools
Schenectady, N. Y.

Staten Island School
District 31
211 Daniel Low Ter.
Staten Island, N. Y. 10301

The Congdon Campus School
State University College
Potsdam, N. Y. 13676

Watertown City School System
Watertown, N. Y.

Guilderland Middle School
State Farm Road
Guilderland, N. Y.

Churchville-Chili
Central School District
Chestnut Ridge Elementary School
Rochester, N. Y. 14624

Liverpool School District
Morgan Road
Liverpool, N. Y.

Mamaroneck Schools
Mamaroneck, N. Y.

Elmira City Schools
Elmira, N. Y.

State University College
at Brockport
Brockport, N. Y. 14420

Little Falls School System
Little Falls, N. Y.

Allegany Central School District
Allegany, N. Y.

East Aurora School District
430 Main St.
East Aurora, N. Y. 14052

Harrison Public Schools
Harrison, N. Y.

New Rochelle Public Schools
Columbus Elem. School
Washington Ave.
New Rochelle, N. Y.

Vestal Public Schools
Vestal, N. Y.

Shoreham
State University of New York
at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, N. Y. 11790

Glen Cove City Schools
Administration Bldg.
Dosoris Lane
Glen Cove, N. Y. 11542

Hewlett-Woodmere Schools
60 Everit Ave.
Hewlett, N. Y. 11557

Hicksville Public Schools
Administration Building
Division Ave.
Hicksville, N. Y. 11801

Northport Public Schools
Box 210
Northport, N. Y. 11768

Levittown Public Schools
Administration Bldg.
North Village Green
Levittown, N. Y. 11756

Monroe-Woodbury School District
Central Valley, N. Y.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

1. a. What is the age range and socio-economic status of the children? How are they grouped or organized?
   b. How many children are you responsible for?
   c. What is the policy of visitation?
   d. Are specialists, outside visitors, etc. involved in the operation of the classroom? Who are they and what do they do?
   e. Is the environment around the school utilized? Are any trips conducted away from the classroom?

2. How would you describe a typical day in your classroom?
   a. How is the day divided up? Are you satisfied with the division?

3. How are reading, writing, math, arts and sciences handled? How do these overlap?
   a. What percentage of time do you teach the class as a whole? How much time do you spend working individually or in groups with children?
   b. Do you use workbooks, textbooks, group readers, etc.?
   c. How specifically is the curriculum made functional? What sorts of resources and materials do you use?

4. How much undirected time does a child have? How do you balance between a child's interests and involvements and what you feel he should be doing?

5. How much do you feel a child gains by "messing about?" How much value do you see in the latter?

6. a. What sorts of expectations do you have for each child?
   b. How would you characterize your relationship to each child?
   c. How well does a teacher know each child?
   d. How much control do you feel you exercise?
   e. How can you tell whether you are getting through to a child?
   f. How do you keep track of a child's progress? How do you grade him? How do you report a child's progress to the parents?
   g. How do you go about preparing for each day?

7. a. How much competition is there among children?
   b. How much do children of different ages and levels of development interact? What do you feel they get out of such interaction?
   c. How is a child's learning in the classroom reinforced? What part do you feel you play in the latter? Do children often provide reinforcement to each other's learning? How?
   d. How would you describe a child's reaction when he makes an error?

8. What is the role of the principal in the school? How is the principal involved in the operations of the classroom?

9. How often do parents visit the classroom? Are the latter involved with the classroom and the school's operations? Are your expectations shaped in any way by what the parents want? Do the parents by and large seem uneasy, enthusiastic or indifferent about the program?

10. What special preparation have you had for teaching in an open classroom?

11. What are your major problems at this point? Are there any drawbacks to open education as you see it?

12. What things are you most positive about with this approach?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. How large is the school? How many teachers and classrooms are involved in open education?

2. Your school has been identified as representing "open education." What are the major dimensions that you feel operate in your school to have it labeled an "open classroom?"
   a. What does a child typically do or learn in such a setting from day to day?
   b. How much is a child left alone to pursue his own interests or activities?

3. How would you describe the curriculum that exists in the classroom? What makes it "open?"

4. What particular things do teachers do that define them as teaching in the "open classroom style?"

5. How do you view your role as a principal in such a setting? How are you involved in the operations of the classroom? How often do you visit the classroom? What do you do when you are there?

6. How long and how much preparation were you and the teachers involved in before the change?

7. How is the evaluation of a child's progress handled? How does the school inform the parents of a child's progress in the classroom? How does the school communicate other information to the parents/community about the classroom? What information is communicated?

8. How are parents involved with the classroom? Do the latter generally support the program? In what ways? What are the main satisfactions and/or concerns?

9. What are your major problems at this point? Are there any drawbacks to open education as you see it?

10. What things are you most positive about with this approach?

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

1. How is the room organized?
   What things in the room are most conspicuous?

2. How is the day divided up?

3. What seems to be happening in reading/writing/math/arts and sciences?
   How do these overlap?

4. What seems to be the general classroom pattern?
   Are children working alone, is the teacher occupied individually or in groups with children, is the class taught as a whole?

5. a. What does the teacher seem to expect of the children?
   b. How much control does the teacher exercise?
   c. How free are the students to move about the room and building?

6. How is a child's learning in the classroom reinforced?
   Do children often provide reinforcement to each other's learning?
   How?

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

1. What kinds of things do you do with yourself/with your friends/with the teacher?
   What do you spend most of your day doing?
   Does your activity vary from day to day?
   How?

2. Do you talk about school with your parents?
   If so, what sorts of things do you talk about?

3. What do you like about school?
   What do you dislike about it?

4. What would you like to see changed, if that were possible?

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

282 Mosley Road
Fairport, New York 14450
March 28, 1972

As I mentioned to you on the telephone, I am doing a doctoral study at the University of Rochester which is a description of the public, elementary open classrooms in New York State. The latter appears to be much needed, since almost no studies have been made detailing what the United States is doing in the way of open education.

The reactions and feelings of the parents to such a program are an important part of such a description. I would greatly appreciate your time and effort in filling out the questionnaire.

If you could return this by April 15, it would be much appreciated. I am enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Send all 4 pages back (the cover letter and the 3 pages of the questionnaire). Please fill out the preliminary information immediately below. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Philip S. Morse

Preliminary Information: A. Name, grade, and age of child (children) attending an open classroom.

B. Were you able to choose whether or not to send your child to this school?

Directions: Please provide answers to the following questions in the space provided. Use extra sheets if necessary.

1. In what ways are your child's progress and other information reported to you by the school?

2. In what ways if any do you participate in the operations of the school either through time spent at the school or in activities and meetings connected with the school?

3. How would you describe your child's general reaction to the new approach? What, in particular, does he or she like or dislike about the new approach?

4. In what ways do you feel your child is gaining, remaining about the same, or losing ground by participating in such an approach?

5. Are you generally supportive of, neutral, or hostile toward the new approach? What programs, goals, methods, or activities of the school influence your reaction?

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

282 Mosley Road
Fairport, New York 14450
April 18, 1972

I am doing a dissertation study at the University of Rochester sponsored, funded, and to be published by the U.S. Office of Education involving a survey of public open classrooms in New York State. The study is attempting to provide one of the first descriptions on a state-wide level of what form American open education is taking. As you probably realize, almost no research has been done in this important area.

I have been given your name by the Education Department Chairman of a nearby college as an appropriate person who could give the enclosed questionnaire to a teacher who is conducting an open classroom and who would be willing to fill out the questionnaire. The latter should take no more than 15 or 20 minutes.

I would much appreciate your help since relatively few districts in New York State are conducting what is labeled an open classroom. Information from this questionnaire will greatly help in providing an accurate picture of New York State open classrooms.

I shall be pleased and grateful if I can include data from your district in the study. Also enclosed is a self-addressed envelope for the teacher's convenience.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely yours,

Philip S. Morse

QUESTIONNAIRE*

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number which most closely expresses your estimate of the extent to which the statement is true of your own classroom. If the statement is absolutely not the case, circle "1"; if it is very minimally true, choose"2." If the statement generally describes your classroom, choose "3"; if it is absolutely true choose '4."

*Reproduced with full permission by Education Development Center

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. Texts and materials are supplied in class sets so that all children may have their own.	1	2	3	4
2. Each child has a space for his personal storage and the major part of the classroom is organized for common use.	1	2	3	4
3. Materials are kept out of the way until they are distributed or used under my direction.	1	2	3	4
4. Many different activities go on simultaneously.	1	2	3	4
5. Children are expected to do their own work without getting help from other children.	1	2	3	4
6. Manipulative materials are supplied in great diversity and range, with little replication.	1	2	3	4
7. The day is divided into large blocks of time within which children, with my help, determine their own routine.	1	2	3	4
8. Children work individually and in small groups at various activities.	1	2	3	4
9. Books are supplied in diversity and profusion (including reference books, children's literature).	1	2	3	4

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
10. Children are not supposed to move about the room without asking permission.	1	2	3	4
11. Desks are arranged so that every child can see the blackboard or teacher from his desk.	1	2	3	4
12. The environment includes materials I have developed.	1	2	3	4
13. Common environmental materials are provided.	1	2	3	4
14. Children may voluntarily use other areas of the building and school yard as part of their school time.	1	2	3	4
15. Our program includes use of the neighborhood.	1	2	3	4
16. Children use "books" written by their classmates as part of their reading and reference materials.	1	2	3	4
17. I prefer that children not talk when they are supposed to be working.	1	2	3	4
18. Children voluntarily group and regroup themselves.	1	2	3	4
19. The environment includes materials developed or supplied by the children.	1	2	3	4
20. I plan and schedule the children's activities through the day.	1	2	3	4
21. I make sure children use materials only as instructed.	1	2	3	4
22. I group children for lessons directed at specific needs.	1	2	3	4
23. Children work directly with manipulative materials.	1	2	3	4

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
24. Materials are readily accessible to children.	1	2	3	4
25. I promote a purposeful atmosphere by expecting and enabling children to use time productively and to value their work and learning.	1	2	3	4
26. I use test results to group children in reading and/or math.	1	2	3	4
27. Children expect me to correct all their work.	1	2	3	4
28. I base my instruction on each individual child and his interaction with materials and equipment.	1	2	3	4
29. I give children tests to find out what they know.	1	2	3	4
30. The emotional climate is warm and accepting.	1	2	3	4
31. The work children do is divided into subject matter areas.	1	2	3	4
32. My lessons and assignments are given to the class as a whole.	1	2	3	4
33. To obtain diagnostic information, I observe the specific work or concern of a child closely and ask immediate, experience-based questions.	1	2	3	4
34. I base my instruction on curriculum guides or the text books for the grade level I teach.	1	2	3	4
35. I keep notes and write individual histories of each child's intellectual, emotional, and physical development.	1	2	3	4
36. I have children for just one year.	1	2	3	4

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
37. The class operates within clear guidelines, made explicit.	1	2	3	4
38. I take care of dealing with conflicts and disruptive behavior without involving the group.	1	2	3	4
39. Children's activities, products and ideas are reflected abundantly about the classroom.	1	2	3	4
40. I am in charge.	1	2	3	4
41. Before suggesting any extension or redirection of activity, I give diagnostic attention to the particular child and his particular activity.	1	2	3	4
42. The children spontaneously look at and discuss each other's work.	1	2	3	4
43. I use tests to evaluate children and rate them in comparison to their peers.	1	2	3	4
44. I use the assistance of someone in a supportive advisory capacity.	1	2	3	4
45. I try to keep all children within my sight so that I can be sure they are doing what they are supposed to do.	1	2	3	4
46. I have helpful colleagues with whom I discuss teaching ideas.	1	2	3	4
47. I keep a collection of each child's work for use in evaluating his development.	1	2	3	4
48. Evaluation provides information to guide my instruction and provisioning for the classroom.	1	2	3	4
49. Academic achievement is my top priority for the children.	1	2	3	4
50. Children are deeply involved in what they are doing through the day.	1	2	3	4

Teacher's name______________________________

School______________________________

Location______________________________

Present position: permanent______________

provisional______________

temporary______________

Age: 20-25_____

26-30_____

31-40_____

41-50_____

51-60_____

over 60___

Education (check all applicable): Normal school degree_____
Bachelor's degree_______
Master's degree________
Other (specify)________

Address: in locality of school______________________

elsewhere____________________________

Your classroom:

Grade level (check one)

Kindergarten___
1st grade_____
2nd grade_____
Other (specify)______________

Ungraded 1-3___
Ungraded 1 & 2___
Ungraded 2 & 3___

Ungraded K & 1___
Ungraded K-2____
Ungraded K-3____

Ability range: streamed/ability grouping______

mixed ability grouping________

Number of children________

Racial composition: white_______
(give approximate %)

nonwhite____

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE SIX
OPEN CLASSROOM SCHOOL DISTRICTS

282 Mosley Road
Fairport, New York 14450
December 12, 1971

I am doing a dissertation study approved by the University of Rochester School of Education faculty and supported by a U.S.O.E. regional project research grant entitled "A Survey of Selected, Public, Elementary Open Classrooms in New York State." Since the New York State's Task Force on Open Education lists your district as having one of the six public open classroom projects in New York State proper, I am writing to inquire whether I might include your school as part of my study of open education public schools in New York State.

The study will involve two days of interviewing and observing with a concentration on specific, formulated questions. Interviews will be with the teacher and administrator involved with the classroom.

In addition, the study will consist of observation by myself, brief interviews with four children, and the contacting of five parents who will be asked to fill out a questionnaire.

My total intent is to gain as clear and comprehensive a picture as possible of what open education in New York State is. It will be entirely a descriptive study with no attempt being made at evaluation. As you probably realize, available research provides almost no studies which present a general description of just what form open education in the United States is taking. I believe that such a description of New York State open classroom efforts can provide a valuable base for other schools across the nation attempting or thinking of attempting such a project.

I have purposely been as brief as possible, while still trying to convey the full scope and intent of the study. I will be glad to answer any question or points of confusion you may have regarding the study. I look forward to the possibility of visiting your school in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Philip S. Morse

SAMPLE LETTER TO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HEADS

282 Mosley Road
Fairport, New York 14450
January 17, 1972

I am doing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Rochester supported by a United States Office of Education regional project research grant entitled "A Survey of Selected, Public, Elementary Open Classrooms in New York State." I am trying to establish in my study as clear and comprehensive a picture as possible of what form open education in New York State is taking.

Part of my study includes a questionnaire sampling of school districts in New York State that have programs involving new or existing open classroom projects. If possible the following information would be greatly appreciated: (1) a list of the public school districts in the surrounding area of your college that have operating at least one classroom that is conducted according to what the school district considers to be open education. (2) a listing, if possible, of the appropriate contact person(s) in each school district and his address.

For your convenience I have included a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope and space below for the names of any districts and the name and address of the appropriate individual(s) in charge of the open classroom project in that district.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Morse

School District	Contact Person(s)	Address